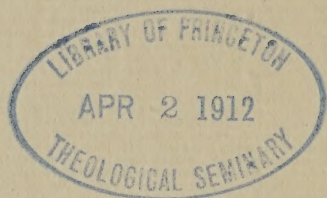


CATHOLICISM

AND THE MODERN MIND

MALCOLM QUIN



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Catholicism and the modern
mind

CATHOLICISM AND THE MODERN MIND

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AND

THE MODERN MIND

A CONTRIBUTION TO RELIGIOUS
UNITY AND PROGRESS

BY

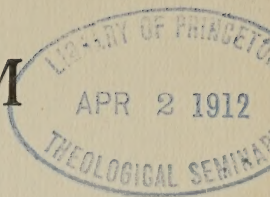
MALCOLM QUIN

"We serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness
of the letter."—*Romans* vii. 6.

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD

1912

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TO

GEORGE WEDDELL,

IN TESTIMONY TO A FRIENDSHIP WHICH HAS THIS

IN COMMON WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH,

THE SUBJECT OF THE

FOLLOWING PAGES, THAT, BEING OLD,

IT IS YET NEW

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A PREFATORY LETTER TO HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS X

MOST HOLY FATHER,

In the following pages I presume to submit for your consideration—and through you, as the supreme spiritual authority of Christendom, to all, of whatever communion or school, who are concerned for the religious unity and development of mankind, or even only for its advancement in culture and social progress—certain thoughts on the position and tasks of the Catholic Church, under the conditions, intellectual and practical, of the modern world. When I speak of the “Catholic Church,” I do not use these words in the vague and confusing sense which is now so often given to them; I use them to denote that Church whose acknowledged centre is Rome, and whose administrative Head is the Pope. In so using them, I have no intention, as the course of this work will sufficiently show, of denying—what, in any case, no individual mind has any authority to deny—the spiritual title and value of other communions which sometimes claim to be “Catholic,” or, perhaps, to be “branches” of the Catholic Church. I use them, if I may be allowed the expression, for purposes of scientific accuracy and precision. The religious meaning of the word “Catholic” is, as I hold, historically given to it by the Church which is often described as “Roman”; which began to organize itself as a social body in the first century of the Christian era; which was Catholic, in prin-

ciple and name, before a single one of our present European nations, with their "national Churches," had come into existence; which afterwards gathered into a vast spiritual society the various peoples of the West; which, almost from the first, looked, as it looks now, to Rome as its capital; and which, in the course of its expansion, as the universal organ of Christ in the life of man, threw up the characteristic doctrines, forms of worship, and modes of organization expressed by the word "Catholicism." Whether, therefore, we take as our criterion antiquity, continuity, numbers, international authority, or religious completeness, the Christian communities which do not acknowledge the direction of the Pope are, scientifically speaking, less Catholic than the one which does; and in so far as they are Catholic at all, are Catholic by virtue of those distinctive features of the Catholic Church which they have retained or regained, while separating themselves from its order and rule. This is not a question of sectarian prejudice; it is a question of historic fact, or, if we prefer the expression, of right sociological comparison.

In addressing the Head of the Catholic Church, it would be unnecessary for me to insist on so obvious a principle if it were not, first, that the arguments of this treatise are an appeal, not to its members only, but to all who value the ideal and name of Catholicism, and, indeed, to all serious workers for human good; secondly, that it has a definite relation to the great practical purpose by which those arguments are governed. That purpose is to promote the universal ascendancy of Catholicism, considered as the positive presentation and realization of Christ in the life of mankind. If I were to say that this purpose is to contribute to the religious unity of man, I should use words which, because they would be abstract and indefinite, would doubtless command a wider immediate assent. Both modes of statement, however, bring us ultimately to the same conclusion.

Religion does not exist, and never has existed, in the world merely as a number of definitions or abstractions; it has always existed, and it exists now, as organized communities or Churches, or, adopting a different terminology, as specific masses of social force, dependent on persisting states of the human mind. We are not entitled to propose to ourselves such an aim as the religious unification of mankind without taking into account these social masses, and without considering the religious future of Humanity in relation to them. Least of all, in the pursuit of such an aim, is it possible for us to set aside so commanding a body of religious vitality as the Catholic Church, which holds within itself, and has always held—as nothing else holds or has ever held—all the distinctive powers of Christendom.

We are not, of course, bound to set before ourselves any such aim as the religious unification of man. We may be indifferent to it. We may consider it to be undesirable. We may despair of it. It may seem to us so chimerical and utopian that we may feel absolved of all responsibility in regard to it, and may content ourselves with the pursuit of some smaller, attainable good. This, perhaps, is the common attitude. If, however, we embrace this high, inspiring ideal of religious unity, we are bound to remember that we are not living in a world of philosophic abstractions, but of accomplished facts and working forces, and that what we do, or propose to do, in religion must have a relation—a relation of unreserved submission, or of acceptance accompanied by modification, development, and completion—to what has already been done, and most of all to what is of most importance. A religious unification which sets itself in total opposition to the past conceptions and achievement of Humanity in religion—and especially to its conceptions and achievement in the highest plane of its intellectual and practical expansion—is, of course, no religious unification at all. It is a contradiction in terms.

I am one of those—a large and increasing company, as I believe—who, in different ways and from different stand-points, hold and pursue this great aim of religious unity. But because I hold and pursue it, I express it to myself, not in abstract or indefinite terms, but in concrete and definite terms ; I express it as the positive fulfilment of Catholicism, considered as the voice and organ of Jesus Christ, and of what Jesus Christ represents, in the life of mankind. Religion is given in history. Jesus Christ is given. Catholicism, His social realization, is given. This being so, those who, in our modern world, and with the resources of the modern spirit, pursue the ideal of human unity in religion have the nature and limits of their work already determined for them : they are, by virtue of the fact that they pursue it, the heirs and auxiliaries of Catholicism, and their task is to give to Catholicism the positive interpretation, extension, and development necessary in order that it may bring the life of man, in all its spheres, into the unity of Jesus Christ.

Any value which the following pages may possess depends on the degree in which they are a contribution to this high aim. In saying this, however, I feel under an obligation—even at the risk of an undue personalism, and of repeating things which I have said elsewhere—to make clear the point of view from which I have come to regard the ideal of human unity in religion. To the ideal itself, as an adherent of the religious system of Auguste Comte, I devoted thirty years of teaching and public effort. My only excuse for now referring to that long time of religious study and labour—a somewhat exceptional attempt, however imperfect and limited, to realize the conceptions of that great thinker in worship and life—is that to the experiences and reflections which it brought me I owe, in a large measure the convictions which I have tried to express in this volume. The aim which inspired and sustained this attempt—the com-

plete religious unification of the mind and action of man—remains, for me, unchanged. It still seems to me, as it seemed a generation ago, the noblest of human causes—an interest, if “interest” is not too weak a word for it, on which all the other interests of man, theoretic and practical, can be shown ultimately to depend. In the same way, I have not lost my sense of the greatness of Auguste Comte’s synthetic genius, or of the importance of his positive and constructive work amidst the uncertainties and confusion of modern thought. In spite of the defects and limitations—some of them of a fatal consequence—which I have come to recognize in him, I must still say that there is no other thinker known to me who can compare with him in the profundity and range of mind which he has brought to bear on the things which are high and lasting in the fate of Humanity; and certainly there is no one thinker to whom I personally owe, or can ever owe, so much.

The aim which Comte ultimately proposed to himself, however, and which by its transcendent greatness and inspiration drew me, as it has drawn others, to him, is of more importance than his personal genius, and, indeed, gives us our measure of his genius, and of his failure or success in his work. That aim, as I have said, was the complete unification of religion, considered as the indispensable basis of human order and progress. It was his profession and pursuit of this aim, and the courage and affluence of mind which he dedicated to it, which made me, in an exclusive sense, his disciple, and, within the limits of my powers and opportunities, a member of the spiritual mission which he sought to institute; it was my recognition, after thirty years of service and study, that, judging him by his own principles, he had failed to accomplish this aim which separated me from him, and made me cease to be, in any exclusive or sectarian sense, his religious adherent. In a freer and wider sense—in that sense in which we must

all acknowledge ourselves the disciples of a great teacher who has given us enlargement and guidance—I am proud to still call myself his adherent, and this none the less because the convictions which have compelled me, in certain vital respects, to dissociate myself from him, I have gained, in no small degree, from his own work, and from the completeness with which I endeavoured to fulfil it. Auguste Comte proposed to himself to bring in the religious unity of the world by a system which totally excluded Jesus Christ. I, however, found, in thirty years of teaching and labour devoted to the realization of his distinctive ideas, that every constructive principle which he gave to me, and every path of historic inquiry which he opened out to me, and every exercise of commemoration and worship in which he engaged me, carried me back to Jesus Christ as the world's eternal centre in religion, and the consecrating, incarnate Truth of man's spiritual unity and development.

I cannot regard even so long an apprenticeship as wholly wasted which has led me to such a conclusion, or think of Auguste Comte with any other feeling than one of gratitude, even although in the pursuit of the aim which carried me to him, and by principles which I have largely drawn from him, I have reached a truth which, in a sectarian or exclusive sense, has made it impossible for me to remain his adherent. This truth, according to the conceptions and in the relations in which I now hold it, I should not have held without the special experiences and reflections which so many years of study and work as one of Comte's disciples naturally brought with them. The effect of those experiences and reflections has been to establish and fix for me four cardinal principles, which, as they govern all the conclusions of the following pages, I may permit myself to indicate here :

1. *The Principle of Catholicism, or of Religious Unity and*

Universality.—This, I repeat, seems to me, now as ever before, the master principle, the great enlarging ideal of human life. By religious unity, however, I do not mean merely the common profession of formal creeds, or a community of external worship, although these things, when unity is real, will naturally enter into it: I mean the complete ordering of human life, within and without, moral, intellectual, and practical, individual and social, private and public, in accordance with the spirit and truths of religion. Further, I mean by it a unity in time as well as in space—one which, even if in varying degrees, comprehends the whole life of Humanity, past and present, and carries us forward to its unfolding and development in the future.

2. *The Principle of Jesus Christ.*—There can be no religious unity for man, complete in time and space, which does not turn upon Jesus Christ, according to a positive and synthetic conception of Him, as its centre.

3. *The Principle of the Church.*—Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, ideally considered, are one and the same thing. As He is given, so it is given—never to be set aside or cast out of the consciousness of religious Humanity, but to govern all its spiritual development in the future,

“As the Sun rules, even with a tyrant’s gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of Planets, struggling fierce towards heaven’s free wilderness.”

Without Jesus Christ there would have been no Catholic Church, for the Catholic Church, in its spiritual working, is Christ realized; and yet the converse is not less true, that without the Catholic Church there would have been no Jesus Christ, considered as a living, organic, shaping principle in the life of Humanity.

4. *The Principle of the Modern Mind.*—Stated more largely, and at the same time more exactly, what I here call the principle of the modern mind is the principle of

progress. It is, in other terms, the principle of development, of an ever-emerging and expanding unity. The Catholic Church, in the full conception of it, is not a thing of the Middle Ages only; it is a thing of all the ages; it is man in his mind and life, as a spiritual and social being, coming ever into fuller correspondence with a Perfection given in consciousness, and progressively ordering all his powers with a view to its realization. I have, in this volume, endeavoured to give to the expression "the modern mind" a definite significance. Here it must suffice to say that I mean by it especially, but not exclusively, the total body of positive culture and real experience proper to Western Europe during the last six centuries. The modern mind, so considered, is as much a sovereign authority as is the Catholic Church within its own distinctive domain. But the two authorities, the two domains, cannot be kept separate. They touch each other at all points. So long as Catholicism and the modern mind are, and in proportion as they are, in antagonism, religious unity—or, in other words, the full ascendancy of Christ in the world—is impossible. The Catholic Church, whatever some of its apologists may say, cannot renounce the ideal of religious unity. If it did, it would cease to be itself. On the other hand, it cannot now pursue and realize religious unity except by the concurrence and co-operation of the modern mind. In precisely the same way, however, the modern mind, as distinguished from Catholicism, and in opposition to Catholicism, cannot stand by itself, and give unity to the life of man. Of the many illustrious thinkers in philosophy and science who have arisen in Europe since the outbreak of Protestantism, not a single one, and not all in combination, great as may have been their contributions to truth, have been able either to set aside Catholicism or to throw up, in its stead, a sufficient practical principle of co-ordination and unity. There is no such principle, apart from Christ and

Catholicism. We may say broadly that everything in Western culture and effort during the last six centuries—art, literature, philosophy, science, politics, and industry—finds in Christ and Catholicism its ultimate criterion, and ought always to be viewed in relation to them. But there is no such principle or criterion in such a conception of Christ and Catholicism as repudiates what is sure and high in the modern mind—in the developed conscience and reason of a mature Humanity.

It is the object of the ensuing pages to make some contribution towards the reconciliation of these two apparently opposing forces—towards the harmony of things old and new. In making such a contribution, I am glad to think that, as I have said, I am only one of a large number of persons at the present time, of various schools and communions, occupied, more or less consciously, with a similar task in a similar spirit. The significant religious movement of our age, amidst all its conflicts and distraction, is, I believe, a movement for the recovery of great things rejected or neglected, and their association, in a synthesis of living, operative truths, with the progressive conquests and powers of the human spirit. In my discussion of the relations of Catholicism with the modern mind there is probably much that to every student of these great questions will be familiar, and little that can claim to be original. I hope, indeed, that this is the case. What the world needs at the present time is not originality—if by originality is meant a self-sufficient, dispersive individualism which obtrudes the person, but obscures the principle—but the informing, illuminating influence of a great unifying cause, enriching and dignifying personality, by lifting it out of its egoism and converting it into an instrument of high human co-operation. Not simply a mind or a book the more, but minds and books fulfilling Jesus Christ in a large Catholicism, is what is required to bring in

the progressive harmony of Humanity. Therefore, it would not distress me to be told, what I feel sure is true, that many of the things said in this volume have often been said, and better said, by others. In two respects, however, it may perhaps make some slight claim to be distinctive. In the first place, it is largely the outcome of a special religious experience bearing upon its objects, which, from the nature of the case, few can have had in an equal degree. In the second, I have, with a completeness and unreserve which, so far as I know, have not been common, but which I believe to be indispensable, insisted on the principle that the Catholic Church, in its integrity, must be our starting-point in the progressive religious unification of Humanity.

And as it has not been difficult for me to assume such a position, so it is not difficult for me to address these prefatory words to the supreme ruler of that Church. Although I am not, and under existing conditions, perhaps cannot be, formally a member of it, in spirit, I dare to say, I am in communion with it. Throughout the whole of my public life I have been engaged, as a part of my religious task—with an aim identical with that which inspires this work, even if with so different a conception of it—in vindicating Catholicism to the sceptical reason; in elucidating and justifying its greater distinctive doctrines; in honouring its saints, its monastic founders, its religious orders, its doctors and rulers; in upholding its organization and institutions; in attempting, in some sort, to continue its beautiful worship; in paying tribute to its spiritual discipline. It is, therefore, with no sense of strangeness or inconsequence that, after having been thus for thirty years a voice crying in the wilderness of the modern religious revolution, I now find myself, not by a mere literary artifice, but with unfeigned veneration and homage, submitting to the august Head of the Catholic

Church—the Vicar of Christ in the world, the representative of the great Catholicism of the past, the symbol and prophet, as I believe, of a still greater Catholicism to come—a plea for its modern reinforcement and expansion, as the chosen instrument of a religious universality embracing the life of the world.

“Poca favilla gran fiamma seconda
Forse retro da me con miglior voci
Si pregherà perchè Cirra risponda.”

MALCOLM QUIN.

"Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum."—PS. cxxxiii.

"We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another."—ST. PAUL.

"Toute la suite des hommes, pendant le cours de tant de siècles, doit être considérée comme un même homme, qui subsiste toujours et qui apprend continuellement."—PASCAL.

*"The Child is father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."*

WORDSWORTH.

*"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose
runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of
the suns."*

TENNYSON.

"Progress consists essentially in this, that man becomes more and more religious."—AUGUSTE COMTE.

"Restaurare omnia in Christo."—POPE PIUS X.

CATHOLICISM AND THE MODERN MIND

CHAPTER I

THE MODERN RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION

By the state of religious revolution, scientifically understood, and in reference to Western Christendom, we here

The State of Religious Revolution. mean the complete and permanent rejection, in principle, of the religious order—an order of worship and conduct resting on an order of

belief—which is especially represented by the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages, and which found a full expansion in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. When we speak of the state of religion which then existed as an “order,” we do not, of course, mean that it was a perfect order, or that it was not characterized, from the point of view of the aims which Catholicism proposed to itself, by great evils and defects; we mean that it was a state of relative settlement in the region of the mind, giving rise, in degree, to a corresponding settlement in the region of life. The fundamental and governing idea on which this order rested was the idea of Christ; its typical institutions were, on the one hand, the Papacy, as the centralizing and co-ordinating power of an international Church, and, on the other hand, the feudal sovereign, representative of the local and temporal authority of the State. Everything else in the medieval system may be considered as accessory to

these dominant and shaping forces, and as capable of being represented by them.

The modern religious revolution, in its final form, is, we say, the complete and permanent subversion of this order—

The Rise of
Protestantism. especially, of course, on its spiritual side—and the substitution for it of a state of unsettlement or disorder. We are not, for the

moment, considering how far this revolution may be held to be—what many revolutions have undoubtedly been—inevitable and beneficent; we are only concerned to determine its nature. Again, we are not, at present, occupied with the question of whether many of the great movements of thought and life in the modern world have not, in fact, within their own spheres, been positive and constructive. What we are now examining is the deliberate and avowed rejection of the medieval order of religious ideas, and of the order of feeling and conduct dependent upon it. This rejection, as we know, has been constantly progressive during nearly four hundred years. Considered as a process of open and conscious revolt, it began with Luther's repudiation of the rule of the Papacy, and the assertion, more or less explicit and consistent, of the principle of private judgment, in opposition to the principle of authority. It immediately afterwards embraced great principles of doctrine, worship, and discipline—questions of faith and sin, of the Mother of God, of the future life, of the number and nature of the sacraments, of the Holy Eucharist, of tradition, of the monastic life, of the priesthood, of ritual, and of the veneration of the saints. The effect of this action of the revolutionary spirit—a preliminary and partial action, as we may call it—was threefold. First, it broke up the unity of the Western Church—the spiritual order of medieval Europe—and substituted for it a state of permanent conflict, the Catholic Church, on the one hand, and the various Protestant bodies on the other, entering upon those relations of alienation and active antagonism which have existed ever since. Secondly,

it separated a large part of European Christendom from its own past, and forced it, in greater or less degree, upon a repudiation of the efforts made, during more than a thousand years, to realize the idea of Christ, in doctrine, worship, and life. Thirdly, it prepared the way for further and greater changes—for an indefinite extension of the disorder which was thus begun. One of these changes has been the continued multiplication, down even to our own time, of Protestant or metaphysical sects, and the growth of relations of persistent dissension and hostility amongst them.

It is not, however, until we come to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that we are able to gain a full measure of the modern religious revolution, considered, as we are bound to consider it, as a subversion and permanent rejection of the medieval spiritual order, and the substitution for it of a state of chronic unsettlement. The word "modern," of course, is often freely and loosely employed. By historians it is commonly used to denote the whole period that has elapsed since the Protestant disruption. By others it is often applied only to the latest phases of our own contemporary life. When, however, we speak of so great an event as the modern religious revolution—the most serious and the deepest disturbance to which the mind of man has ever been subject—it is necessary not to base ourselves on too narrow an area of human experience, in space or time. We must carefully watch the ebb and flow of thought before we can determine the direction of its tidal movement. What is contemporary can only be understood in reference to what is historic. The religious revolution, as it manifests itself at the present time, might possibly be regarded as a merely local or temporary aberration, if we did not throw ourselves back upon the four centuries which separate us from the Middle Ages, and recognize that the revolution, as it exists to-day, is only the culmination of a process which, in one form or another, has been steadily

extending its range during all that period, throughout the wide life of Western Christendom. What we call Protestantism is only a special and local form of it. Protestantism, indeed, is, on one view of it, only arrested disintegration. It threw up centres of partial order—or, rather, it preserved, within certain limits and in varying degree, great and precious constituents of that medieval spiritual order against which it directed its force.

By the religious revolution, as it exhibits itself to-day, therefore, we do not mean Protestantism. We mean something which goes much beyond Protestantism in its range of rejection, and differs profoundly from what are known as the Protestant Churches in having no avowed purpose of Christian preservation. The modern religious revolution—here using the word “modern” to denote the contemporary consummation of a long historic process—does not exist in Protestant countries only, but in Catholic countries also. It is not English or German merely, but European. It is not the repudiation of the Pope alone, but of Christ. It does not simply reject the authority of the Church in the interpretation of the Scriptures; it rejects the Scriptures themselves. It is not merely a disavowal of what is distinctive in the liturgy of Catholicism, or in its sacramental teaching, or in its conception of the priesthood; it is a total and fundamental disavowal of all religious worship and prayer, and of every form of Church and priesthood. By the modern religious revolution, in a word, we mean, ultimately, atheism—the complete and avowed rejection, in the mind and intention of those who have become subject to it, of those fundamental ideas of God and Christ on which the medieval spiritual order was built, and, as a consequence, of all the principles of doctrine, worship, and discipline which followed from their acceptance.

When we say that the modern religious revolution, in its final form and effect, is atheism, we use the word “atheism,” of course, with a scientific intention only. In

these grave matters a temper of controversy and reprobation cannot help us. It serves rather to bring hindrances and confusion into an argument which, because of its natural difficulty and perplexity, requires that we should approach it with all the intellectual patience and justness of which we are capable. We cannot now hope, if ever men could hope, to solve the problems of the human mind, or to win others to what seem to us the great things of religion, by issuing sentences of anathema and proscription. This truth the Catholic Church, and all other Churches, must learn to recognize; and if they will not recognize it now, the time will come when a world alienated and in full revolt will press it upon them.

It has been held by some thinkers that the mental state which we denote by the word "atheism" is, strictly speaking, impossible. By this, we may suppose, they have meant, not that an individual mind is unable to dismiss or to lose every definite conception of Deity that has ever found a place in religion, but that all men, whether they will it or not, must be conscious, in degree, of a Power without them and within them, and to which they confess themselves to be, in various ways, subject, whatever the mental representation, or the name, which they may happen to give to it. They may, for example, think of this Power as the infinite, inexplicable Order of the universe, visible and invisible, and content themselves with expressing its nature and their relation to it, as far as possible, in analytic terms of objective science; but still, in so far as they recognize the existence of such an Order, they are, within assignable limits, on common ground with those who are called theists because, recognizing exactly the same Order, they represent it to themselves in symbolic terms of human personality, and name their conception of it God. Again, they may speak of this Power, as is so often done, as "the First Great Cause." The word "cause," as we know, is, in itself, only a verbal abstraction. It has no effective meaning until we apply it to some specific antecedent condition, or group

of antecedent conditions, in an invariable succession of experiences. When, therefore, we speak of a first or ultimate Cause, we mean, not some single factor, but the universal assemblage of factors, or forces, of which all particular experiences may be considered to be, however indirectly, the resultants and expression—a universal assemblage or order, which, because it is infinite and immeasurable, we cannot conceive of as being resolved into a whole larger than itself, and which we rightly, therefore, regard as the ultimate “cause” of all particular “things” contained within it. The First Great Cause and the Infinite Immeasurable Order of the Universe, visible and invisible, are, as a consequence, equivalent expressions; and it may be held that, as all men must, in degree, recognize the existence of such an Order or Cause, some conceiving it and designating it in one way and some in another, there is really no state of mind possible corresponding to the word “atheism.” We may, of course, use the words “Supreme Being” to denote exactly the same fundamental Order or Cause, extending the application of the word “being,” as, strictly speaking, we are entitled to do, beyond the merely organic, or vital, region to that infinite, immeasurable complex of beings, animate and inanimate, “very God of very God,” of which all lesser beings—including a conscious and scrutinizing Humanity, capable of looking without and looking within—form a part.

It would seem, then, to be true that, on a fundamental analysis, there is no such thing possible as atheism, all individual minds throughout the ages being variously conscious—and this not in a diminishing but in an ever-increasing degree—of the existence of a Supreme and Governing Order, Cause, or Being, visible and invisible, infinite and immeasurable, without them and within them, which they represent by different symbolic conceptions and names. It is certainly of the utmost consequence to recognize this truth—first, because it enables us to see a continuous and progressive

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order in the human mind, in indissoluble relation with a continuous and unfolding order external to it; secondly, because it helps us to understand that most of our theological and philosophic controversies really turn, in the last resort, upon the use to be made of certain words—a use which the human spirit, in its forward movement, is constantly enlarging or modifying, even while it steadily and rightly clings to the words themselves. It is a gain, and a great gain, in religious investigation and discussion to recognize that the word “God,” standing alone, is, after all, a word, and a word only—not a thing. It is certainly the supreme word of human speech. It carries with it the consecration and the force of the whole of man’s religious development; and we may be reasonably sure that man, so long as he continues to be religious, will continue to use it, and use it in reference to the same governing facts of his consciousness as have given rise to its employment in the past. Nevertheless, man is, when he chooses to exercise his rational powers, the master of words, and not their slave. Of some things he is not the master. He is not the lord of the world without him; he is not the lord of the world within. He cannot abrogate sensation or sensibility. He cannot dismiss from his consciousness the sun and the stars, or annul the feelings of awe and beauty to which they give rise within him. He cannot permanently escape from the somewhat similar emotions which are awakened in him as he looks in upon the eternal mystery of his own inner life.

These things are still, in substance, what they have always been, ever since man could be called a religious being. He has reasoned in various ways throughout the ages, but these basic constituents of his experience invariably reassert themselves. As a mere matter of logic, however, he is not bound to represent any synthesis of these experiences by the word “God.” That is a linguistic question only, or a question of verbal symbols, and man, who is not the master of his sensations or his sensibilities, is certainly,

in degree, and in strict reasoning, the master of language—capable either of using or of disusing certain definite words, in his attempts to co-ordinate and express his experiences. In a fundamental sense, it may be true that man cannot be atheistic if he would. God is in the universal nature of things, living and non-living, without man and within him. Yet men might, conceivably, and in the abstract, give to this nature, including what we are accustomed to call the supernatural, another name than the name God. “By no created name,” says Justin Martyr, “can we name Him.” Matthew Arnold, when he spoke of “the Eternal, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness,” had the everlasting thought of God in his mind. So, too, had Herbert Spencer, with his “Unknowable,” or his “Infinite and Eternal Energy, by which all things are created and sustained.” So, doubtless, in some sort, had the men of the French Revolution, when, in their frenzy and bewilderment, they set up their “Goddess of Reason.” So, also, had Auguste Comte when, acting under a somewhat similar inspiration, he called his Supreme Being “Humanity,” and represented it as a “Woman of thirty with her son in her arms.” Things and names are not identical. Men may, as individuals, dismiss the word God from their vocabulary, and even profess themselves atheists, but they may still necessarily retain, in degree, something of the conceptions and emotions which have entered into the force of this supreme word.

While, however, this is true, and is a truth which it is of the highest importance to recognize, we are bound for the practical purposes of religion, to come back to a meaning of the word “atheism” which is at once more definite and more relative. We are considering the nature and effect of the modern religious revolution. That revolution we define, in general terms, as a complete rejection of the medieval spiritual order, of which Protestantism, in its various forms, and on its negative side, may be regarded as a partial rejection. When, therefore, we say that the modern religious revolu-

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tion finds its final expression as atheism, we mean, not merely that it disavows God as an abstract idea or expression, but that it disavows God as Christ. Atheism, considered as the last term of the Western religious revolution, is not simply the repudiation of a given cosmic hypothesis or belief; it is the repudiation of Christ. Even before the birth of Christ, of course, the word "God" was something infinitely more than a word of philosophy, or of formal theology. The religious heart and imagination of man existed before philosophy, just as poetry came before criticism, or the worship of the stars before astronomy. The God of the Psalms, or of Isaiah, or of the Book of Job, is not the God of philosophers, considered as such, any more than He is the God of modern Biblical exegetes. But in Christ the conception of God assumed a new character. He brought in a new dispensation. That developed conception of God, considered merely from the historic or scientific point of view, and allowing fully for all the intellectual and practical influences that contributed to its shaping, became the centralizing element of the medieval spiritual order. This we all know.

Modern revolutionary atheism, which is characterized by its complete rejection of that order, may, therefore, be especially and simply understood as the rejection of Christ. In saying this, however, we are bound to allow for certain rejections of Christ which are either not at all, or which are not in this sense, atheistic. The Jews, for example, reject Christ, but no one would call them atheists. They inhabit Christendom, but have never formed a part of it. They hold unchanged, or are supposed to hold unchanged, the same conception of Deity as finds expression in the Old Testament. That is not a revolutionary, but a highly conservative attitude, although it may be considered the conservatism of those who have failed to enter into the progressive religious movement of Humanity. Unitarians, again, regarded not as mere speculative theists, but as a religious body, cannot rightly be classed as atheists,

although the God of Christendom, who is Christ, they are commonly supposed not to recognize, and although the medieval spiritual order has, in a high degree, lost its hold upon them. Once more, Auguste Comte and the small number of persons who claim to be his complete "religious" disciples are atheists certainly in the sense of professing to be adherents of a "positive" religion, or a religion "without God," and even in the further sense of wholly dismissing Christ, in principle, from their system of belief; yet it would be intellectually improper to rank them with ordinary atheists, even while it is true that, according to the criterion which we have here adopted, their position is profoundly revolutionary. Here also it is essential to remember the distinction between words and things—between man's religious feelings and conceptions, and the varying verbal symbols which he has employed to represent them.

CHAPTER II

THE REVOLUTION AND CHRIST

WE come, then, to the true atheism—to the modern religious revolution in its complete and final form. The case of the Jews, or of such small sects as the Unitarians and religious Positivists, is one for which, on grounds of scientific accuracy, we are bound to allow, but in a broad survey of the life of Christendom it is special and unimportant. It does not really affect the ultimate issue—any more, for example, than it can be affected by the rise and existence, for a certain number of years, of such an estimable body as the Quakers. These are drops in the ocean. But atheism does and must affect it. Atheism—of which the word “agnosticism” is, of course, for practical purposes, only a decorous synonym—is the true antithesis of the medieval spiritual order. Atheism represents the modern religious revolution in its fulfilment. Atheism, in this sense, is not an argument only, but an argument which finds expression in an attitude. It denotes the state of mind of a man who—in the degree in which such a result can be brought about by intention and will—has put Christ, deliberately and on principle, out of his consciousness, and who orders his life, in so far as he orders it at all, without reference to any such conception. We are not now, of course, discussing the personal attributes of such a man, in other respects. He may be, in actual outward conduct, and judged by what we may call our conventional ethical standards, either wholly admirable or wholly despicable. With this we are

not for the moment concerned. Our present object is to understand the nature of atheism, considered, not as the loss of a merely passive state of mind or emotion in reference to the controlling order of the universe, but as the conscious rejection of that religious conception of God on which the medieval spiritual order was based. This rejection is a definite rejection, inevitably followed by definite consequences—consequences which must be measured and estimated by reference to the nature of what is thus rejected.

The God of religion is not, as we have said, the God of philosophers only—of the men who are occupied with cosmic problems, and to whom God is, above all, a “cause,” or an explanatory hypothesis. Again, the God of religion is not merely, or even principally, the God of theologians. Theologians are those who are concerned with the formal science, or doctrine, of God—certainly an important science, but one which has played relatively a small part in the religious life of mankind. The God of religion, as we can see when we look at any of the greater Scriptures of the world, Christian or non-Christian, is above all the God of worship. Philosophers and theologians, as such, discourse and dispute about His attributes; the religious mind, as such, adores Him. That, perhaps, is why philosophers and theologians, even while they are apparently engaged in a profound analysis of the idea of God, often seem not to know much about Him. They appear, that is, not to know what He has been to the countless millions of human souls who have never analyzed Him, but only worshipped Him. From this point of view, it is no exaggeration to say that an incapacity for worship is a natural disqualification for understanding history—for rightly estimating the nature and effect of certain ideas which, in innumerable ways, have exercised a governing ascendancy in the life of mankind. Religion is best understood, not in the school, but in the Church. In the school God may be only a cause or a principle; in the Church He is transcendent Goodness, Beauty, Wisdom, and

Power—in a word, infinite and unsearchable Perfection, to Whom the soul, conscious of its own imperfections and limitations, lifts itself and endeavours to conform itself. There is the same difference between the God of philosophic or theologic argument and the God of worship that there is between Nature as she is studied by science, and Nature as she presents herself to the poet or artist, or to those who, without being themselves poets or artists, have yet the poetic or artistic sensibility.

And if this is true of the general conception of God, much more is it true of that conception of God as Christ which, nineteen hundred years ago, had its birth in the consciousness of Western Humanity, and ever since has held a supreme place there. The medieval religious order was not, as it is sometimes called, a theocracy; it was, if we are to use so pedantic an expression, a Christocracy; it was an order founded on the spiritual ascendancy of Christ in the human soul. Theocracies the world has had before and since Christ. The Jews had such a theocracy. The Moham-medans have such a theocracy at the present time. On a certain view of theocracy, the whole ancient world, Eastern and Western, may be said to have been under the government of a theocracy. When Christ came, so far as the Western world is concerned, the theocracy passed away, and the Christocracy took its place. The Christocracy was the Spirit of Christ working in the human spirit, and throwing up its own instruments of realization in the organized society of Europe. The result was the Catholic Church, of which the central point was, and is, the altar. Here, of course, we are resting on the ground of plain, incontestable historic fact. The question of origins—that question which, in our uncertain, troubled modern world, is, for many, of supreme importance—is, for our immediate purpose, of minor consequence, however great in itself.

It is perfectly true, and it is a truth which, from every point of view, it is essential to bear in mind, that when the

conception of Christ entered into the human spirit, and began to work there, the mind of man was not like an empty chamber, waiting for a guest. It was already tenanted; and the forces which were resident in it and active inevitably exercised an influence—an influence either of resistance or nullification, or of co-operation and development—upon the force of Christ, just as the force of Christ, in its turn, had a neutralizing or transforming effect upon these hereditary and traditional powers of the human spirit. The Parable of the Sower is as illuminating in the field of history as in the field of the spiritual life. No one can suppose that Christ entered the human soul as an annihilating omnipotence, immediately and completely substituting Himself for all its feelings, thoughts, memories, imaginations, and resolves. Christian history is unintelligible on such a supposition, which is, indeed, plainly contrary to common sense. Christ entered the mind and life of man, and worked, as one force amongst many, becoming, in degree, subject to some, but gradually and progressively bringing things into conformity with Himself, and establishing Himself as a power of inspiration, direction, and control, in the being of Humanity. The obstinate, persistent passions of men; the religions of the ancient world—the Roman, the Greek, the Oriental, including the Jewish; its art, its philosophy, its science, its military, political, social, and industrial conditions—these things all helped to determine the way in which men received and conceived Christ, and in which they set about the slow and painful task of shaping an order of individual and social life in some sort in correspondence with Him.

But the result is none the less certain. The history of the growth of the medieval spiritual order shows, undoubtedly, a many-sided movement of forces, co-operating or conflicting, proceeding from the ancient world, proceeding towards the modern. But of this co-operation and conflict we have a measure—a measure which is just as unmistakable and

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of Christ.

certain whether we look back upon man as he was before the establishment of the Roman Empire, or consider him as he has since shown himself in the world of Western civilization. This measure is Christ. The co-operation and the conflict turned upon Him; and the scientific historian must say now, in words which were once ascribed to Julian: "O Galilean, Thou hast conquered." The more force we allow—and a great force we must justly allow—to Greek intellectual culture, to Roman civilization, and to Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, and other Eastern religious influences, in the shaping of the Catholic order, the more power do we ascribe to that transcendent Personal Image—the Image of a Divine Humanity or of a Human Divinity—which, rising and working in the soul and life of man, subdued and absorbed all these forces, and ever afterwards ordered and represented them. It is, indeed, precisely because Christ has thus drawn to Himself the great things that went before Him, whether Eastern or Western, and the great things that have succeeded to Him, that He presents Himself to us as the Supreme Humanity—the governing solar centre of the spiritual world.

There are, as we know, certain recent critics who seek to resolve the ideas of Christ into what are called "nature-myths," and especially, perhaps, into solar myths. These hypotheses are not without value. They call attention once more to that large, spontaneous, many-sided preparation for Christ to which we have already referred, and which is so far from having been discovered for the first time in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that, in degree, it was recognized and pointed out by the earliest of Christian historians. In themselves, however, these speculations are open to the charge of not sufficiently distinguishing between one order of conceptions and another, and between one historic period and another. The Christ of history—meaning by this expression, of course, what we certainly ought to mean by it, not simply the Christ of the Gospel narratives, but the Christ of progressive Christian

civilization during nineteen hundred years—is not a nature-myth. When the conception of Christ arose, and began to work in the human spirit, the age for the formation of nature-myths was passing away, although, like all such constructions, they had left in the mind of man a permanent deposit, which inevitably had its influence in the shaping of subsequent religious ideas. A nature-myth is a spontaneous representation of external natural processes by processes and terms of personal humanity. It is, of course, quite easy to go back to historic times and areas when the formation of such myths was the characteristic state of human intelligence. At the time which we may roughly date from the commencement of the Roman Empire this was ceasing to be the case. It is precisely the historic mark of that time that the religions which were founded on nature-myths were—and this especially within the limits of the Empire—visibly falling into decay. The year commonly assigned for the birth of Christ is the thirty-second year of the Emperor Augustus, dating his accession to power from the battle of Actium. This we may take as an historic point. It was almost eighty years after the death of Julius Cæsar, and the establishment of our existing calendar. The culture of Greece and Rome was diffusing itself throughout the world. It was the beginning of the Roman peace. Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Thucydides, Hipparchus, and Archimedes, had done their work. In Rome Cicero had been dead forty-three years, Virgil nineteen, and Lucretius about fifty-five. It was the immediate eve of the age of Tacitus and Epictetus, of Seneca and Juvenal, of Philo and Josephus. It was not at such a period and under such conditions, when the old nature-myths themselves were everywhere succumbing to the influence of a solvent scepticism, or were, in greater or less degree, being consciously transformed into allegories, that a new nature-myth of a similar character could hope to permanently impose itself on the intelligence of the most active and progressive portion of the human race.

For the rest, nature-myths themselves, in the definite sense of these words, represent a spontaneous effort of man's mind to form and express some sort of conception of the Universal Order of which he is a part, and of his own relation to that Order. When Christ was born in the world—in other words, when the conception of the Universal Order, and of man as he enters into it and interprets it, found its ultimate expression in His Divine and Human Personality—the nature-myth, properly speaking, had lost its *raison d'être*. The human spirit then entered on a higher plane, and took a bolder flight. It was assuredly not as a nature-myth, properly understood, although it was certainly as a representative and personal embodiment of all nature—Divine, human, material, visible and invisible—that Christ, slowly and by successive stages, against criticism, ridicule, aversion, and persecution, won upon the genius of Humanity, so becoming the acknowledged God of the world's highest civilization, and the centre of the Catholic Order. The acceptance of this new idea of the Divinity represented, on the intellectual side, the growth of a rational apprehension of the unity of the Universal Order; it represented, on the moral side, the ascendancy of a final ideal of perfect goodness, embodied in forms of personal humanity; it represented, on the practical side, the will of man moving consciously and progressively towards the practical fulfilment of this ideal within him and without him—in his own heart and mind, and in the ordered energies of his social life.

Here we have no shadowy and uncertain hypothesis as to the formation and the dates of Scripture texts, or as to the complex elements that entered into the conception of Christ. That overruling conception, as it has lived and worked in the human mind, is as sure and plain a fact as any with which the astronomer or the chemist is called upon to deal. If we carry our minds progressively backwards, century after century, from this twentieth Christian century to the first, we find ourselves always in presence of

this conception; and wherever we find it, we find it confessed as supreme and dominant, and actually governing human life, in degree, in accordance with the nature of such a conception. It is as certain a sociological verity that Christ has been the God of Christian civilization as that Apollo was a god of the Greeks. That Apollo, sociologically and historically considered, is to be ranked amongst gods no one, of course, would dispute. We now class him with the deities of ancient mythology. The early Christians, or some of them at least, while still admitting his real objective existence, classed him amongst the devils. No one, however, doubts that the word "Apollo" denotes one of the supreme and dominant ideas of Greek religion. In the same way, no one can doubt that this idea of divinity represents a spontaneous and provisional synthesis of real experiences—taking the word "experience" to mean, what it must mean, not only an observation of outward facts, but an emotional and imaginative relation to them, and a consciousness of the inner facts of emotion and thought. It was a spontaneous synthesis; it was an incomplete and provisional synthesis—one of a large number of similar syntheses, the shaping and maintenance of which is characteristic of ancient culture.

It was destined, as they were destined, to give place to a complete and final synthesis—to that synthesis which, on the one hand, is condensed and symbolically expressed by the Divinity of Christ, and which, on the other, is represented by the vast and ordered domain of modern science, with all its categories, from those of the elementary truths of mathematics to those of the highest verities of sociology and morals. We say that the Divinity of Christ expresses this synthesis for the simple and sufficient reason that the controlling points of human consciousness now—after nineteen hundred years of moral, intellectual, and practical development—are, in essentials, the same as they were when first the Divinity of Christ established itself in the human mind. Those con-

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trolling points are—first, the sense of the unity of the Universal Order—a unity such that any one “thing,” either an outward fact or an inner idea, may, in varying degree, stand for the whole ; secondly, the sense that what is of supreme consequence in human life is Goodness, inner and outer, of which it is admittedly impossible to form a higher ideal than that of a spiritual, self-sacrificing, self-ordering, and beneficent love ; thirdly, the sense that there is in man a natural capacity to progressively realize such an ideal in human life, emotional, intellectual and practical, individual and social.

We say, further, that the Divinity of Christ expresses this synthesis because, as a matter of historic fact, it is in subjection to these permanent, controlling points that the whole high development of Western civilization—that is to say, the development of the leading and progressive constituent of Humanity—has taken place. The synthesis itself has gone on ever extending its range of completeness and accuracy, as a representation to man of man himself, and of that Universal Order of which he is at once a part and a self-conscious interpreter. One great science after another has been thrown up, and has advanced towards an ideal sureness and fulness of investigation and colligation. One art after another, similarly, has arisen, to add to our power of representing, in concrete and symbolic forms of the beautiful, the same essential experiences as enter into the categories of science. So, too, age after age, the practical power of man has continually grown, either in the field of nature or in the sphere of social life, with the result that he has become a directing lord of material and human force. Yet the governing points of his consciousness are still, as they were nineteen hundred years ago, that sense of the unity of the Universal Order which, in philosophic terms, is expressed by the word “monotheism” ; that sense of an ideal spiritual perfection which is embodied and symbolized by the conception of the Divine Christ ; that sense of an ordered, harmonious,

religious, and social life which is denoted by the idea of the Church.

The Divinity of Christ, then, is the central and centralizing force of the Catholic Order, as it organized itself in the

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of God.

Middle Ages, and as, in spite of the modifications and disruptions to which it has been subject, it has persisted ever since. In saying this, of course, we use the word "Divinity" in a sense scientific or philosophic. We use it as a word of experience. The word "God," we must once more say, standing by itself, is a word only. It is a general term, depending for its actual force on any special application which may be given to it. It is one of the offices of modern reason, employing the full resources of history and science, to assign to this term a positive connotation. It has been one of the mistakes of modern reason—one of many which it has inevitably made in the course of its free and partial expansion—to assume that a rational examination of the word "God" would necessarily disallow it, or bring discredit upon it, as a word of experience. This is so far from being true, that the fuller and deeper our examination of this word, the stronger become its claims to be considered, not only a word of experience, but the greatest of all words of experience. From this point of view, theology is truly the supreme science—the science of sciences, completing and embracing all the others. It is only this, however, on condition—first, that it employs, in the highest regions of human thought, the same essential methods of investigation and proof as are adopted in the lower regions, subject only to such additions and developments as the greater complexity and obscurity of its special problems may demand; secondly, that it accepts from the other sciences, not necessarily, of course, the mere hypotheses and large conjectures which are sometimes popularly confounded with science, but all their demonstrated and useful truths.

From the point of view of science, then—which, in this connection, is the same thing as the point of view of theology

or of history—it is obvious that Christ is the God of Christendom. A Christian is one who confesses Him and worships Him as God. We cannot, of course,

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Experience.

say that He is, in the same sense, the God of non-Christian peoples, ancient or modern, although it is certainly true—and it is a truth which it is of high importance to recognize—that the attributes of His Divinity have been indirectly recognized in degree by many, both in the ancient world and the modern, who have never heard His name. “Before Abraham was I am,” said Our Lord. It would, however, confuse the issue to call such persons Christians, although, to use Tertullian’s phrase, they may, in a certain measure, have had the *mens naturaliter Christiana*. The Christian, properly so-called, is one who consciously confesses and worships Christ as God. The word “God,” scientifically understood, is a word of religion, just as the word “gravitation” is a word of physics, or the word “atom” is a word of chemistry. None of these words has the same significance and force when taken out of its own categories or relations. By the word “God,” religiously, and therefore scientifically, employed, we mean, in general analytic terms, the expression in symbolic forms of human personality, and for the purposes of worship and conduct, of the Universal and Infinite Order, objective and subjective, visible and invisible, in its ever-developing relation to the ever-developing consciousness of man. This Universal and Infinite Order is not, as Auguste Comte says, by the nature of the case, capable of explanation—that is to say, of being resolved into a cognate whole greater than itself—but is rather itself the source of all explanation, since by “explanation” we can never mean anything else than the establishment of definite, unvarying, measurable relations between one phenomenon, or group of phenomena, and the antecedent conditions which have produced it. Therefore, the word “God” is truly, as it has been always felt to be, an ultimate term—denoting something in relation to which the human mind ceases to have powers of explanation or

comprehension, but which it is, nevertheless, capable of apprehending, and of representing to itself, in degree, by symbolic conceptions and forms.

By this, however, we certainly do not mean that the word "God" is not a term of experience. It is, on the contrary, as we have already said, a word which denotes the fullest synthesis of experiences which the human mind is able to form, including not merely those objective experiences which are analyzed and classified by science, but also our sense of the inexplicable, and our feeling for the good and the beautiful. The range of real experience and the range of analytic explanation are not, as we all know, the same thing. We must not, therefore, for the meaning of the word "God," go to formal science alone, or to the definitions of Churches or Councils alone. Its meaning is given in emotion and imagination, as well as in reason, and is expressed much more fully in terms and forms of poetry and art than by the categories of analytic science. If this were not so, the history of religion would be unintelligible. The word "God" is not a scholastic word only: it is, if such an expression may be allowed, a popular word. There rests upon it the stamp of universality. The shaping of its abstract and formal connotation has, indeed, been a task of genius and progressive science; but its practical religious meaning—which is of much deeper and wider importance than its mere theologic definition—has been given to it by the developing heart and mind of man. This is what we mean by saying that it is the supreme word of human experience. We are not entitled, when we are trying to fix the religious value of this word, to dismiss from the field of human consciousness, first, the immeasurable physical and vital universe external to Humanity; secondly, the continuous social life of man; thirdly, the inner, self-conscious life of man's own soul, with all its feelings, thoughts, imaginations, and volitions; and then, to the unthinkable, empty, negative abstraction which is left—stripped of every conceivable attribute of love, wisdom,

beauty, or power—to apply the name “God.” No such God has ever found a place in the religious mind. It is not too much to say that, from the point of view of religion—which, once more, is the point of view of science—the meaning of the word “God” is as much determined, although intuitively determined, by the humblest worshipper in a Catholic church as by the formulas of the proudest theologian. The saint may keep God when the philosopher has lost Him, and if the philosopher recovers Him, it is perhaps because he, too, has become a saint.

If this is true of the word “God,” considered simply as a general term, much more is it true of that particular conception of God which, [nineteen hundred years ago, began to establish itself in the consciousness of the most civilized and progressive part of Humanity. We cannot, indeed, say that Christ has not been the God of philosophers and theologians. He has been the God of the human reason, touching its highest point, just as He has been the God of human volition, reaching after its proudest practical conquests. He has not been the God of the contemplative mind only, clinging to an image of spiritual beauty in the serene air of the sanctuary; He has been the God of the thinkers and the strong men of the West, who have explored and mastered our human world, and made the peoples of the East subject to their knowledge and power. This is history. Moreover, it would be a serious mistake to say that the philosophers and theologians, as such, have not contributed greatly to the spiritual ascendancy of Christ in Christendom. They have contributed to the conception and reign of Christ in the human mind what science has contributed to the conception and reign of nature or Humanity—an analytic and systematic view of relations, an ordered and formal expression of arguments and conclusions.

Nevertheless, just as when the astronomer, the botanist, the sociologist and the moralist, have spoken their last word, the stars in the heavens, and the living things of

earth, and man, who broods upon them and upon himself, remain and work their work in the human spirit as presences of beauty and power, so Christ, when the discussions of the philosophers and theologians concerning Him have ceased, lives in the soul as a transcendent governing Image, bringing all other images into greater or less accord with itself, and illuminating them with its solar radiance. It lives thus in the soul because it is the Image of God—because, that is to say, it is the image of a Perfect Personal Humanity, summing up and representing in itself the Universal Infinite Order, visible and invisible, of which man is at once a part and a self-conscious interpreter, and which remains to-day, what it was two thousand years ago, a unity of thought, ever increasingly immeasurable and mysterious. We rightly and reasonably use the word “God” to denote this supreme Image, as it has thus lived and worked in the mind of Christendom—the realm of Christ; we do not properly use it to denote a blank, unintelligible, negative, formless abstraction, at which we arrive, if ever we can be said to arrive, by a process of exhaustion, when the whole infinite universe, seen and unseen, and every definite feeling and vision of man, have been dismissed from the field of consciousness and imagination. We use the word “God” to denote this Image, in short, because it is the scientific word for it—the only word which exhibits its real relation to the mind of Christian Humanity, and which serves to explain the formation and maintenance of the Medieval Spiritual Order. From the point of view of the Divine and Personal Christ—a cosmic symbol to the human mind, in His representative relation to the Infinite Order of the Universe external to man; a symbol of perfect spiritual Goodness, in His representative relation to Humanity—we can understand that medieval Order, with the altar as its central point, with its churches, its priesthood, its Papacy, its Eucharistic and other sacraments, its saints, its worship of the Virgin, its religious communities

The Divine
Christ.

and Orders, its developing liturgy, its seasons and festivals constituting the Christian year, and that vast expression of the Christian mind, in forms of beauty and truth, which we call the art and literature of Western civilization.

Under the ascendancy of this Image of the Divine and Human Christ—Divine by an incontestable title, because

Christ in the
Human Mind.

confessed as supreme and perfect by the reason

and heart of a worshipping community ; human

because nevertheless stamped with the form

and attributes of a personal yet representative Humanity—

the spiritual order of Christendom grew up. It is rightly

called a spiritual order because it was formed by the

operation of the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, of Christ,

proceeding both from the Father and the Son, which, after

His disappearance in the flesh, began to work progressively

in the souls of men, and drew them, in varying degree, to

His presence. This remains true, whether we hold the

traditional view as to the historical character of the

Christian Scriptures, and Christ's three years of public life

and ministry, or consider, as some appear to do, that those

Scriptures have no historical character at all. On either

view, Christendom is a sociological fact, and a fact which

owes its origin to the further fact that at a given historic

point—which, by common consent, lies within the first

hundred years of our era—the Image of Christ, as a definite

personal type, with distinguishing attributes and character-

istics, began to work in the human mind, and to give rise

to forms of doctrine, language, worship, and life, individual

and social, in correspondence with itself.

This spiritual fact becomes of all the greater importance

when we remember that the Christian Scriptures them-

selves, which are now a universal possession, and which

are so potent an aid to the common apprehension of Christ,

were, in the early ages of Christianity—and, indeed, for long

afterwards—unknown or inaccessible to the vast majority

of believers. That is one reason, out of many, why the

minute and anxious analysis to which modern inquiry, for

so long a time, has subjected the writings of the New Testament must seem excessive and out of place. It is clear that the New Testament did not give to Christ His ascendancy in the human soul, but that He, on the contrary, first won for Himself a place there, and then, as a natural consequence, invested with high authority and attractiveness all that seemed to have relation to Him and to bear witness to Him. We cannot now retrace, step by step, all the processes, major and minor, by which this ascendancy was gradually built up. The result, however, is certain, and it is the result that is alone important. We must not, historically speaking, say that the New Testament—of which the canon was not finally established until nearly the end of the second century—produced the conception of Christ; we must say, instead, that the conception of Christ produced the New Testament, and produced it by living and working in the minds of an ever-increasing number of men and women, as a supreme and definite personal Image, exercising a co-ordinating and illuminating predominance, and drawing all things, in degree, to itself. Further, we cannot historically say that the diffusion of the power of Christ has ever—even within the Protestant period—been in proportion to the diffusion of the New Testament, profound and essential as the influence of the New Testament has been. Christ worked in the first ages, and has worked throughout all the ages, not so much by means of a written volume as by means of His Holy Spirit, kindling and inspiring men, and expressing itself in the spoken word and in forms of worship and life.

It is indispensable to recognize this ancient scientific verity. The word "God," like every word of human speech, denotes a relation—a relation between the responsive, shaping soul of man and something which, however we may represent it, and whether it is conceived of as without us or within us, presents itself to us as an affection of consciousness. The dualism of subject and object in human thought—two distinct, yet correlative, interdepen-

dent and commingled realities—is fundamental and eternal. It cannot be bridged over or transcended. It is a truth of which the negative is inconceivable. It is implied in every word of human speech. It is so inevitably true that if—using traditional and conventional figures of speech—we supposed ourselves, in some state of future bliss, to be admitted to the immediate presence of God, conceived of as an enthroned Personality, still that state would be a state of relation between the individual human consciousness, however intensified and exalted, and a dominating object of consciousness. In other words, as all “existence,” or “being,” is, by the natural force of words, existence or being relatively to man—as, in fact, all language, including our language about God, arises out of human relations, and is devoid of meaning if considered apart from them—so God Himself can only exist, for man, as an affection of consciousness, subject to discrimination or reason, and as a motive of will. God cannot be conceived of, under whatever circumstances, as a mere submergence, or effacement, of human personality. “In Him we live and move and have our being” does not mean that in Him we are wholly annihilated or lose our individual identity. The Beatific Vision itself must be held to be a relation between a thing in some sort seeing and a Thing in some sort seen.

The greatest step forward that religion has ever taken, the supreme moment in the life of Humanity, was when

Christ and the Catholic Order.	Christ arose to reign in the human soul—in other words, when the complete synthesis of man's experiences, outer and inner, his representation to himself of the Universal Order, found expression in a single transcendent Personal Image, a supreme and unifying object of love, thought, and action. This is what we mean, scientifically speaking, by the recognition and confession of the Divinity of Christ—a Divinity which has worked as a spiritual Presence in the spirit of man, and, so working, has brought his life, in greater or less degree, into
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conformity with itself. This is how the religious order which we call Catholicism arose. Modern atheism, or the modern religious revolution, is, we say, the complete and conscious rejection of that order, in principle and intention, in so far as such a rejection is possible—in so far as the individual mind has the power to actually dissociate itself from the sum of traditions and influences into which it has been born, and which have helped to shape it. We do not, by the word “atheist,” as we have seen, necessarily mean one who has no sense at all of a ruling Order to which he is subject, the nature and laws of which he may, in degree, determine, and to which he finds his well-being in actively conforming himself, in proportion as he understands it. The rudest and least intelligent of men has some vague and elementary perception of such an Order; and if this is true, then atheism, in any complete and absolute sense, is, as some have held, impossible. But we have now found a relative and practical meaning for the word “atheism,” used as the ultimate expression of the modern religious revolution. Atheism, thus considered, means, not the rejection, or loss, of some abstract conception called “God”; it means the rejection of God as Christ, or of Christ as God, and, as a consequence, of the whole spiritual order of Catholicism, as dependent upon that conception.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERISTICS OF ATHEISM

IF we would understand the nature of the modern religious revolution, and the tasks of a progressive Catholicism relatively to that revolution, it is necessary for us to have a simple and practical view of the state of atheism as it actually exists, and not merely to consider it, in the abstract, as the last term in an historic progression. An atheist, relatively to Christendom, is, as we have seen, one who rejects the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and the whole Catholic spiritual order as built upon it. He is not, therefore, "without God" only; he is without God according to that conception of Him in which, with rare exceptions, the men and women of Christendom have been nourished: he is without Christ. Now, of the state of mind of a man who believes Christ to be Divine it is not difficult for us to form a conception. He may, of course, in his personal disposition and morals, be a very imperfect man. With that we are not at present concerned. What distinguishes him as a Christian is that he holds in his mind, in varying degree, an Image of perfect personal Goodness—an ideal unity of spiritual wisdom, love, and beneficence—which represents to him the Divine nature, and which, therefore, has unquestioned and unquestionable claims upon his homage. A Christian, as such, is not one who has a theory about Christ, or who is engaged in analyzing his conception of Christ. He is one who, by instinct, or by an undisturbed habit of feeling and thought, centres and unifies

the whole Universal Order, and his own life as a part of that Order, in Christ. This attitude of his mind finds its decisive and characteristic expression in prayer and worship. It is essential to recognize this. For all practical purposes, we may say that the fundamental difference between the Christian and the atheist, or religious revolutionary, is that the one prays and the other does not. We here use the word "prayer," of course, as it is commonly used, not to denote a mere indefinite stirring of moral emotion or imagination, valuable as that may be in itself, but as a direct appeal, spoken or unspoken, and private or public, to a spiritual Image, conceived of as representing, directly or indirectly, a Supreme Power of Goodness and Wisdom, without us and within us. This principle of prayer is of such cardinal consequence in the religious argument that it is no exaggeration to say that the whole future of Humanity depends upon the question of whether men will continue to pray—and pray with the same essential motive and effect as in the past—or will altogether dismiss the intention and use of prayer from their minds and lives. "No prayer, no religion," says Thomas Carlyle. "Prayer, public or private," says Auguste Comte, "is the essential condition of any worship whatsoever." It is easy to show that the entire spiritual order of Catholicism—that order the complete rejection of which, as we have seen, constitutes atheism—rests, directly or indirectly, upon prayer. "Prayer"—once more to quote Comte—"prayer is the ideal of life, for it is at once to feel, to think, and to act."

It is, therefore, scientifically just to say that the Christian is one who prays, and that whenever he prays, the Spirit of Christ rises and works in him, bringing before him his Lord, as an inspiring, illuminating, and exalting Image. From this point of view, it is essential to remember Comte's words which we have just quoted. Prayer does not represent a movement of feeling only, or of thought only, although it represents both of these; it represents movements of feeling and thought

Importance of
Prayer.

unified and issuing in an act. Prayer is an act of will. We may call it, indeed, the supreme act of will—one which is of deeper significance, relatively to the characteristic nature and spiritual ideals of man, than any merely outward act, whether of apparent charity or philanthropy, or of customary morals, or of intellectual policy, or of industrial, domestic, social, or political life. We call prayer the supreme act of will because in prayer a man comes consciously and willingly into communion with an Image of all Perfection, moral, intellectual, practical, in order that he may renew in himself the power of pursuing it, and of bringing himself in some measure into conformity with it. Prayer, consequently, is not merely a prelude to life; it is itself life—that life which, as Christ taught His disciples, is of all kinds of life the most important, the inner, unseen, spiritual, determining life of imagination, yearning, and resolve, of which the whole external life of man, individual and social, in so far as it deserves to be called religious, is but a consequence and expression. This is none the less true because many men and women, excellent, as it may seem, in outward moral conduct, according to an accepted standard, are not accustomed to pray. They are themselves the fruit of prayer. They live on the prayers of others—on that capital of goodness, in feeling and thought, which has been created and transmitted by those who, whatever their individual shortcomings, have yet, throughout the ages, confessed and pursued in worship the spiritual beauty of Christ.

The Christian, then, prays. He has in his mind, not merely some abstract principle of ethics, which may or may not be applied, according to the variations of his own impulses and will, but a transcendent, gracious, Personal Image, in which the whole Universal Order of things, visible and invisible, is condensed for him in a form radiant and attractive, and in which the true and the good find their ultimate expression in the spiritually beautiful. This Image it is the special office of

The Ideal in
Prayer.

prayer and worship to restore and establish more strongly in his mind. It is, however, not present in conscious prayer and worship only. In varying degrees—degrees naturally dependent upon his own spiritual quality—it accompanies him throughout life. It lives in his looks. It gives itself forth in the language which he uses, and even in the tones of his voice. It affects the objects of his intellectual life, and the way in which he pursues them. It is his pillar of cloud by day, his pillar of fire by night. It brings the music of a spiritual unity into his being, which gives it forth again to the world. It is with him, as a restraining law or as an informing motive, in his work or in his pleasures. He sees it in the stars above him; he beholds it in the faces of his fellow-men. It is in the rising and setting sun, in the movement of the waters over the earth, in the life of trees and flowers and animals, in the unbroken society of mankind, in the vast, mysterious procession of Humanity throughout the ages, in the creations of the poet, in the tones of the musician, in the majestic proportions of some stately cathedral. It is to him an image of himself as he would wish to be—an image of all whom he loves, as he would wish them to become; and when he has fallen below himself into weakness and sin, it is this Image, severe and authoritative in its flawless beauty, which shows him that he has fallen, attracts him back again to the view of its own perfection, and quickens in him the will and the power to pursue it once more. The supreme fact about man, however we may explain or represent it—a fact surpassing in its individual and social importance all the facts which art, philosophy, science, and history, ancient or modern, have ever taken into account—is that he is a being who prays, in this plain religious sense of coming consciously, in the inner sanctuary of his own spiritual nature, into communion with an ideal Personal Humanity, which is also an ideal of God, and of deliberately submitting himself to it, and ordering all his forces, inner and outer, by suppression and

expression, with a view to an ever closer accord with its Divinity.

But the Christian is not only one who, by prayer and worship, and by the consequences of prayer and worship, is in constant spiritual relation with the Divine and Human Christ; he is one who, because he is thus in relation with Christ, is in relation

The Christian
Social State.

also, in varying degree, with all others who are, or have been, similarly in relation with Him. In other words, Christ is the centre and cement of that society which we call Christendom, or the Christian Church, and of which organic Western Catholicism is the fullest coherent expression. This society is not contemporary only; it is historic, or continuous. It is, indeed, constituted, as Auguste Comte has finely said, much more by those whom we call the dead than by the living—much more by the succession of the ages than by any contemporary social relations. So potent has been the Spirit of Christ, living and working in the souls of men as an invisible force, that it has formed and maintained the noblest and most progressive society of human beings that has ever existed in the world. Men, of course, do not become social by proposing to be social; they become social partly because they are drawn together by the natural spontaneous action of human sympathy, and partly by the community of their aims, whether moral, intellectual, or practical. It is the nature of their aims that determines the character of the society to which they give rise. Men may, and do, form societies for a multitude of different purposes—of civil or political life, of industry, of science or art, of pleasure, and even of self-indulgence and vice. They are, in relation to all these interests, social, but being thus social, they are not necessarily religious.

The highest kind of society is that which is formed and maintained for the common pursuit of the highest aims. The highest society is the spiritual, continuous, complete society of the Church, living and developing from age to age. It is in such a society that human love finds its

perfect fulfilment. Used absolutely, the word "love" may be illusory or misleading. When it is used by religious minds—as by Our Lord and St. Paul, or by St. Francis, or St. Bernard, or Thomas à Kempis—it is used with a religious intention or implication. When we truly love we must seek the highest good for those we love. If we wish it for ourselves, we must wish it for them also. For a Christian the highest good, the noblest life of man, is represented by Christ, Who taught men to deny themselves, to love God, to love one another, and to live and to die for others. Christians, therefore, become one, or a unified social life, not by proposing unity to themselves as their common aim, but by proposing Christ as that aim. In such a society—considered, not in its actual imperfection at any one time, but in its ideal state—love is still love, but it is illuminated, exalted, sanctified, and made one force with spiritual wisdom. "We are," says St. Paul, "one body in Christ." That is what, in modern, analytic language, we should now call a sociological truth, understanding, however, by the "one body" not a merely contemporaneous society, but a society ever living and growing, throughout the ages. The Christian is, in principle, in the highest and completest sense, social: first, because he is bound spiritually to Christ, Who is the supreme type and sanction of self-denying, religious, and beneficent love; secondly, because he is bound to all, the living and the dead, who are bound to Christ in the same way. But he is also bound, in hope and anticipation, and by community of human sympathy, to those who are not yet in the kingdom of Christ, but whom he is seeking to bring into it. It may be held that what we call religious continuity is not a desirable thing, but it is at least certain that we cannot have religious continuity in Christendom apart from that confession of Christ as Divine on which the unity of Catholicism has rested for so many centuries.

We are now in a position to understand, simply and practically, the nature and consequences of atheism, or

the modern religious revolution. The atheist has lost, or dismissed, Christ from his consciousness. He does not pray. He does not engage in worship, private or public. The words "God," "religion," "church,"

Effects of
Atheism.

"priest," "sacraments," "altar," have become for

him the terms of a lapsed or lapsing vocabulary. The Bible, in his view, takes its place amongst the other literary documents of ancient faiths. The great church buildings of the world he regards as interesting examples of architecture. Atheists, of course, differ, as other men differ, in temper, culture, and personal conduct. Some of them, judged by our accepted standards, are high and admirable in disposition and character, and would, if they professed religion, be counted religious; others, judged by the same standards, are odious and despicable. Whether they are admirable or odious, however, atheists, as such, within the bounds of Christendom, are characterized by a common intentional rejection of Christ, and therefore of worship and prayer, just as Christians, as such, whatever their personal excellencies or defects, are characterized by their common confession of Him. In so far as an atheist, or agnostic, being a man of intelligence and education, and possessing a high sense of social responsibility, has a systematic view of the human future, he looks forward to a world in which the ideas of God and Christ will, by due process of natural law, have passed away; in which the principles of "ethics" will have taken the place of religion; in which the teacher and the school, in both the narrower and wider senses of these words, will have succeeded to the priest and the Church; and in which what we call the State or the Government, by methods of political repression and co-ordination, will aim at discharging many of those functions which have hitherto devolved upon the Spiritual Power. The atheist, in a word, anticipates a time when the whole spiritual order of the Middle Ages—its ideas of the Divine, its system of religious doctrine, its worship, its discipline, and its priesthood, together with

all other ideas and institutions of religion—will have disappeared entirely from the life of man.

It follows necessarily from this that the atheist, or agnostic, or religious revolutionary—these three terms, for practical purposes, being synonymous—is, not by any ecclesiastical edict, but by the natural force of his own conclusions, religiously excommunicated. He ceases to form a part of that spiritual, continuous society which we call Christendom. He may, of course, have, and, as a matter of fact he usually has, valuable partial and temporary relations with his fellow-beings, based on a certain special community of political, industrial, scientific, literary, or artistic interests—in so far as these interests themselves admit of being divorced from religion—and he has, too, the common human sympathies. He is, however, no longer a constituent of Christendom. He is in the position of the Jew, although for very different reasons. The Jew, as we have seen, is not to be classed as a religious revolutionary. He is outside the Catholic Order because he has never entered into it. The atheist is outside it because, having once formed a part of it, he has by principle and intention quitted it. He has therefore, from the spiritual point of view, passed out of relation with all his contemporaries, as with all his predecessors, in proportion as they remain a Christian society. He has, perhaps, a sort of religious community—a community of a negative kind—with those who, like himself, have wholly rejected the Catholic Order. Societies have sometimes been established for the propagation of atheism, and those who have formed part of such societies have been brought, by the nature of their common aims, into a relation of varying intimacy and stability. The atheist, moreover, may, from his own point of view, look upon himself as forming a part of the great human society of the future. He anticipates a time when all men will have rejected all ideas of God and Christ, and when there will be no such thing as worship or a Church. He is

prospectively at home in that age, and even in the present age he may consider himself a member of a large, intelligent, and active companionship.

The truth, however, remains that the atheist, as such, is separated from the whole society of Christendom as such, contemporary and historic. He is out of relation not only with the religious present, but also with the past, in so far as the past was theistic and Christian. He is, to use a frequent expression of Auguste Comte's, in revolt, on the religious side, against Humanity. This position and attitude necessarily affect his views and action in the various social relations into which he is called upon to enter—as, for example, the relations of marriage and the family life. The atheist, or religious revolutionary, having rejected Christ and the spiritual order built upon Christ, is in morals an individualist. Individualism is, in religion, the natural antithesis of Catholicism. As an individualist he may, both in theory and practice, re-accept for himself, on the warrant of his own personal judgment, or by a sort of empirical acquiescence, much of the Christian teaching in ethics.

He may, however, as an individualist, in greater or less degree, reject it. His agnosticism, as such, carries with it no guarantee that he will do either the one or the other. In any case, when he enters into the marriage relation he takes into it only his personal disposition, whatever it may be, and such social or ethical opinions as he may happen to have acquired. To him marriage does not represent a religious union, but a civil or economic contract; and his sense of responsibility in regard to it is determined, not by the standard of a Church, but by the requirements of the State—requirements which themselves, in our modern world, are subject to change, and are in increasing disaccord with the principles of the Catholic Order. Further, it sometimes happens that the atheist has a religious wife, or even that an atheistic woman has a religious husband. In such cases, which are by no means rare, the family union is

only preserved, in so far as it is still maintained, by its being based on the natural affections and on partial and temporary interests, the greater questions of the human mind being, as far as possible, left out of common consideration, as likely to be provocative of discord. These difficulties are naturally augmented when children are born of such a union, for under any arrangement which may be made, the views of one parent, or of both, have to be wholly or in part subordinated, while the children grow up in an atmosphere of spiritual conflict, or suppression, in the home, and gradually find themselves involved in similar disadvantages, on a larger scale, in their relations with the outside world. These complexities cannot be avoided even when, as is sometimes the case, the parents feel constrained, by the obligations of their own "individualism," to give their children no religious guidance at all, negative or affirmative, but to leave them, as far as possible, to shape their own opinions, or accept the opinions of others, at a later stage.

The order of the family life—constituted, in its simplest form, by the union of husband and wife—is, of course, the nucleus and foundation of the whole order of human society. It is, therefore, within the circle of the family—and fundamentally in the marriage relation—that the social meaning of religious order, on the one hand, and, on the other, the social consequences of religious disorder, are most clearly exhibited. Marriage is a religious institution. In the strict sense of the word, what we now call a civil marriage is a contradiction in terms. In the absence of religion—that is to say, in the absence of the voluntary acceptance of certain definite spiritual ideals and obligations—there can be no such thing as marriage, although, of course, there may be a certain union between man and woman, brought about by the working of natural instinct and affection, and converted into a definite legal contract for the purposes of the State. Auguste Comte holds that there can be no society without

Atheism and
Marriage.

religion. If that is true, it is clear that marriage and the family life, which are basic forms of society, cannot exist without it. By this, of course, we do not mean that an individual atheist in our modern world may not carry into marriage an admirable disposition, and a high sense of its value and dignity, given the existing standard of civilization and conduct. A modern atheist may, as we have seen, accept for himself many of the characteristic doctrines and traditions of Christianity, investing them with such sanction as he personally pleases; and in any case he is naturally subject, in degree, to the spiritual atmosphere which Christianity has created around him.

A particular atheist, therefore, although, by principle and intention, he disowns Christ, may take into the marriage state a higher personal nature and a nobler spontaneous fidelity than a particular Christian. Nevertheless, his marriage is, in the religious sense, not a marriage at all. It is not validly and spiritually social. It does not rest on the common confession of definite ideals and responsibilities. Marriage in the Catholic Church is, as we all know, a part of the worship of Christ. It is a sacrament. Those who receive this sacrament may, of course, receive it unworthily or negligently. Human nature, even when it is under the discipline of religion, does not work by processes of uniform consistency. It has its higher and its lower moments. The name of Christ is not a word of magic. He comes to those who call Him. He even, in various ways, calls to those who do not come to Him. We may, however, forget or dishonour Him, and this in marriage as in other things. Nevertheless, those who accept the sacrament of marriage do, by accepting it, acknowledge, in principle, a common religious ideal—a law by which they consent to be judged, and which, in the relations of the domestic state, is always directly or indirectly appealed to. The atheist, as such, is not in this position. He enters into marriage without Christ, without prayer, without worship. He is not necessarily in spiritual community, negative or positive, with his

wife and children, and, in proportion to his atheism, he is cut off from the whole of Christendom, contemporary and historic.

In these respects, atheism, or the modern religious revolution, extends and completes the processes of religious, and therefore of social, disruption, which were
Atheism
and
Protestantism.
begun by the Protestant Reformation. We do not mean by this, of course, that Protestantism and atheism are, in their effects, the same thing. Protestantism does not separate men from Christ. In its own way, and according to its various forms, it affirms Christ. It affirms Him even in marriage, although it denies to marriage a strictly sacramental character. It does not regard marriage as merely a civil or economic contract, but seeks, in varying degree, to invest it with something of the dignity and beauty of a spiritual institution. In proportion to the sphere of its influence, it constitutes a religious society, or, rather, a complex of distinct societies. Relatively to the Catholic Order, however, Protestantism has been socially disruptive, and this in an ever-increasing measure. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages was an international religious community. This community the Reformation, as we are accustomed to call it, destroyed. We are not at present considering the question of whether or not the rise of Protestantism was, on the whole, beneficent, or the responsibility for its rise, assuming it to have been an evil. On either view, the historic fact remains that, at the Reformation, Western Christendom ceased to be a homogeneous whole in relation to Christ, and broke up into a number of sectarian bodies, permanently estranged from each other, and varying, in their social scale from such large organic Churches as Anglicanism or Lutheranism to such inconsiderable communities as those of the Unitarians and the Quakers. One effect of this multiplication of hostile sects has, of course, been to impair religious community and co-operation in every sphere of human action—not only in the family life, but in politics, industry, culture,

and ordinary social intercourse. Atheism completes and deepens this process of social dislocation, and it is for this reason that we have called it the last term of the Western religious revolution—of the rejection of Christ, and the spiritual order of Catholicism based upon Him. As it is hardly necessary to say, however, atheism is just as common in Catholic countries as in those which we ordinarily call “Protestant.” It is, in fact, in a Catholic country, France, that atheism has received what may be described as its first formal recognition and sanction at the hands of the State.

The modern religious revolution, then, in its complete form, is a state of atheism, in which men reject Christ and the whole spiritual order of worship, doctrine, Agnostics, Evolutionists, Rationalists. and discipline founded upon Christ, together with all other religious ideas and practices, and in which, because they so reject Christ, they pass out of the community of Christendom, contemporary and historic. There are, however, certain other characteristics of the modern religious revolution, as it actually exists, which it is necessary to take into account, when it is our purpose—and no less a purpose are we now proposing to ourselves—to determine its essential nature, and the right attitude and responsibilities of the Catholic Church in regard to it. Atheism is, relatively to Christendom, as we have seen, simply and sufficiently defined by its rejection of the Divinity of Christ, and, by consequence, of prayer and worship. In saying this, let us repeat, we are not using the word “atheism” as a term of controversy or reprobation; we are using it with an intention of scientific recognition and distinction. Reprobation, in relation to such an intention, is both useless and confusing. Atheism, however, understood as we are now understanding it—as the last term of the revolutionary rejection of the Catholic Order—is itself a thing of varying degrees and characteristics. It may be, in relation to that Order, actively negative and hostile. It is doubtless this temper

of contention and repudiation which has given a certain stamp to modern atheism, and won for the word disfavour, both moral and intellectual, even on the part of some whom it theoretically represents. On the one hand, those who have held Christ in the heart, as an image of spiritual beauty and consolation, are naturally pained when language of mere rejection and contumely is used in regard to Him ; on the other, many who have ceased to believe in His Divinity have yet too deep a human sympathy with those who still cherish it to approve of such language, while others regard all such questions simply as questions of science and history, which ought to be approached and examined with severe dispassionateness and equanimity.

There are, however, a large number of men and women for whom, although they are atheistic according to our definition, the word "atheist," in spite of its logical correctness, is no right or sufficient designation. They are atheists in the sense of rejecting all ideas of God and religion, but they are not characteristically occupied with such a rejection. They are what we commonly call unbelievers, but, as a matter of fact, they believe many great things, and are much more concerned with the things they believe than with the things they disbelieve. Christ has passed, in so far as He can ever pass, out of their consciousness, but the arts, science, literature, history, politics, and ethics, are precious and imposing positive interests with which they are seriously occupied. Even religion itself may have for them the attractiveness of a high human manifestation ; and they are quite willing to allow to Christianity a distinguished place amongst the various lapsed faiths which have afforded motives for the arts, or which may be made the subjects of scientific inquiry and disquisition. The large range of intellectual conviction or active social service which is often characteristic of such persons is very inadequately represented by the negative word "atheism," although, in relation to the central conception of Christianity, their position is definitely atheistic.

They may, in view of this wide area of real interests and acquisitions, naturally object to be designated by a word which, while it is strictly correct, is yet misleading.

It is doubtless for this reason, amongst others, that many atheists prefer to call themselves agnostics, although, in their bearing upon the Catholic spiritual order, both these words, of course, have the same significance. They have both, in reference to religion, a merely privative force. Some, again, elect to be described as "evolutionists." This, in itself, is not a negative term. The word "evolution" might be used by a Catholic, as a philosophic expression of some of his own beliefs. As it is commonly employed, however, it represents the views of those—as, for example, of Darwin and Herbert Spencer—who are, by our definition, atheists, who reject the Divinity of Christ and all definite ideas of religion and worship; but who yet prefer to express their position by a word representing that vast body of scientific truths and hypotheses to which they attach importance. Much the same thing is true of the word "rationalist," which is often employed, both by atheists and the opponents of atheism, to denote revolutionary conclusions in religion. There is, of course, no necessary connection between a full and free use of the rational faculties, and any merely negative theories in regard to God and Christ. It is one of the offices of reason to discover its own limitations, as well as to exercise its powers. It is by an act of reason that the necessity and province of faith are determined. The Catholic Church has decreed that by the natural light of reason, apart from revelation, we may obtain a sure knowledge of God. A Catholic, so following the light of reason, is a rationalist. It is, therefore, by an abuse of language—an abuse of which Christians themselves are often guilty—that the word "rationalist" is employed as if it were necessarily synonymous with atheist. Nevertheless, those who are distinctively and emphatically described, or who thus describe themselves, as rationalists are doubtless, in fact,

commonly atheistic, in that plain privative sense which we have uniformly attached to the term.

The use of such words as "agnostic," "evolutionist," and "rationalist," to denote what, relatively to the Catholic spiritual order, is a revolutionary and disruptive attitude is important, not only as showing a certain dislike to a merely and openly negative relation to that order, but as indicating the possession of methods of investigation, as of a body of positive acquisitions, of which these words are supposed to be, in some sort, a representation. Other religious revolutionaries—revolutionary, once more, in the sense of an avowed rejection of the Divinity of Christ, and of the Catholic Order as resting upon it—have exhibited a somewhat more conservative, or perhaps, occasionally, a reactionary, disposition, even in the domain of religion itself. The Saint Simonians in Paris, in the early years of the nineteenth century, had public gatherings in which, amongst other practices, they offered up invocations to Jupiter and Venus. As is well known, some Eastern religions have, in recent years, gained a certain footing in England. A Mohammedan mission was lately, and perhaps still is, in existence there. Buddhism, or some modification of Buddhism, has won converts even amongst those who were once counted "rationalists"; and some, rejecting Christianity, have become adherents of one or other of the schools of Hindu philosophy. Even amongst those continuing to profess atheism there has been occasionally a tendency to invest the expression of their moral sentiments with something of the style of public worship, to the extent, at least, of using hymns, readings, and musical performances. With atheists such as these may be ranked those who, for want of a better word, may be described as "ethicists," and whose meetings and discourses are usually distinguished by their insistence on ethical culture and responsibilities. Occasionally they describe their doctrines, or purposes, as "ethical religion." Socialism,

as an industrial system, is not to be confounded with atheism, except by those who are ignorant of its distinctive nature and proposals; but undoubtedly there are socialists who are atheists—in the sense which we have all along given to this word—and who yet sometimes set up a “Labour Church” in which some remnants of public worship are preserved. They use the word “Church,” or “House of the Lord,” as it has been used by others, to denote a place of meeting in which a belief in Our Lord is not professed, just as some recently built Anglican churches possess an architectural adjunct called a “Lady Chapel,” although the worship of Our Lady is not acknowledged there.

CHAPTER IV

COMTE AND THE RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION

AMONGST modern religious revolutionaries, as they may be called, Auguste Comte and the small body of his avowed adherents occupy a position which is at once exceptional and representative. The significance and value of his work can be best understood from his own writings, voluminous and elaborate as they are, rather than from any representation of his doctrines by those who would describe themselves as his disciples. The total number of these disciples is exceedingly small. They do not form a united or organized body. They are at various points of view in regard to their master's teaching, the great majority of them occupying themselves in practice only with his philosophic and social theories, while amongst the few who profess to accept his religious construction there is, in the same way, little actual agreement, and no commonly recognized interpretative authority. It is, therefore, to Comte's own treatises that we must turn to gain an adequate idea of his relation to the modern religious revolution on the one hand, and of his contribution to the preservation and development of the Catholic Order on the other. Even from those treatises, however, literally construed as they stand, the nature and effect of his work in this respect cannot be fully understood. His construction, vast as it is, is incomplete, and incomplete most of all in those higher regions of religious and moral synthesis to which he himself attached supreme importance. His

mind, to the end of his life, was constantly undergoing changes, some of these of a fundamental character; and as he was always revising his conclusions from the point of view of his successive developments, no one of his books, by itself, even where apparently professing completeness, can be regarded as a final expression of his teaching, or even as a decisive utterance on important points of religious thought or conduct. His later writings also suffer from his attempt to embrace the standpoints and methods of philosophy, science, and religion, in a single work, as well as from the extraordinary abstractness and intricacy of his intellectual processes and modes of expression.

When, however, these obscurities and limitations in Comte's work have been fully allowed for, it still remains

Importance
of Comte.

true that that work is more entitled to the attention of those who are concerned for the preservation and development of Catholicism—

or, in other words, for the preservation and development of religion in its highest and fullest form—in the modern world than that of any other thinker. The reason why this is so will readily become apparent to any religious student—to any student, that is, with whom the ideals and purposes of religion determine the objects and scope of inquiry—who gives a steady and serious consideration to Comte's writings. Those writings are the work of a man who is in relation with the modern spirit where its interests are deepest and widest. He does not, indeed, make an appeal to those who are mainly occupied with questions of cosmic evolution, or of the origin of species, or of the merely textual criticism of the Christian Scriptures. The threefold field of his genius is constituted by Nature, Humanity, and the Soul of Man, considered as we actually find them in an order given in history and experience; and for him the master-word of human speech is "religion."

It is this, in reality, even in his revolt against Catholicism, and where he seems to dismiss the word "religion" altogether from his vocabulary; it is this still more in his latest

years, when he partially returns to Catholicism, and labours, although indirectly and to some extent unconsciously, at the great task of its expansion and unification. It is in relation to these two sides of his genius—the side of revolutionary loss, the side of recovery and synthetic development—that Auguste Comte is of such signal importance in our modern religious world. He is important because we may see largely mirrored in his mind the deep unrest and trouble of that world, along with the forces of reparation and deliverance which are to carry it beyond its disorder—forces none the less visibly at work in him, and none the less beneficent, because they were always urging him towards a point which, in fact, he did not reach. We may see in him both what the modern religious revolution can do against the Catholic Order, and what it is powerless to do. We may see in him, too, if only in degree and imperfectly, what the modern mind, even when working under a revolutionary impulse, and subject to revolutionary hindrances, can do to give security, breadth, and a many-sided development to the essential social rule of Catholicism.

Auguste Comte, born in a French Catholic family amidst the disorder of the Great Revolution, became, as a boy, an atheist—in that plain sense of the word which Comte's Scientific Atheism. we have here uniformly assigned to it. He became alien to Christ, and to Catholicism as the manifestation and organ of Christ. In this sense he remained professedly atheistic, or revolutionary, to the end of his life. In his later years he occupied himself with the construction of what he supposed was a “new religion.” This religion, however—if such an expression is not a contradiction in terms—is avowedly atheistic. It is, as he says, “without God”; and concerning Christ, to the very end, he uses language of repudiation and contumely. He based himself originally on what he considered to be a “law” of man's intellectual development—a law comparable with such sure expressions of natural uniformity as the law of gravitation or the law of combining propor-

tions. According to this "law," the human mind, progressively throughout the ages, has been advancing towards a point when it will have naturally and finally lost all "theological" belief, or belief in a God, and will content itself with a "positive" and scientific doctrine of the universe, based on the analytic determination of the measurable relations of phenomena. This "law," of course, is, by its very terms, atheistic. It represents an atheism which, in its apparent spirit and processes, is scientific.

It is this which gives to Comte's atheism its distinctive significance. He is not satisfied with an atheism of mere personal assertion or noisy rejection. For a simply controversial and negative atheism, indeed, he exhibits an intellectual contempt, in spite of the fact that, from time to time, he himself relapses into it. He is a religious revolutionary who holds the revolution in horror. He looks for the law of things. His atheism, therefore, is, in intention, an expression of a normal and final state of the human reason, rendered inevitable as a consequence of the progressive enlargement of the sum of its experiences, and the gradual improvement of its processes of investigation and inference. It represents, in his view, not the chance conjectures of individual minds, but the developed and settled maturity of the collective mind of man, in dependent and responsive relation with the whole order of the external world. His atheistic law, being a law of mental progress or development, serves as he holds, to explain the conflicting contemporary states of human intelligence, in reference to phenomena of varying speciality and complexity, as well as the different stages of partial equilibrium, or unity, through which man has passed, or is passing, on his way to the universal atheism of the future.

In its negative force and effect, therefore, Comte's "Positivism" represents the atheism which we have already seen to be, in its different forms, the last expression of the modern religious revolution. It is systematic.

It is, by intention, scientific. It is complete. It is based on a large and ordered survey of the past of Humanity ; it serves as a foundation for a definite view of the human future. Comte does not rest, as so many modern minds have rested, in a doubtful or partial rejection of the Catholic spiritual order. Considered as an order founded on the ideas of God and Christ, he rejects it entirely. To him the world in the future, and in a comparatively near future, will be a world in which these ideas will have passed naturally into the same category as the ideas of Jupiter and Apollo : they will be the ideas of a lapsed faith. He holds, indeed, that the end of "theology," or the cessation of belief in God, may be scientifically dated, at any rate for Western Christendom, from the outbreak of the French Revolution. In this view he remains fixed. To an atheism of mere disturbance and recrimination he is, as we have said, decidedly hostile. He has the genius of system and order. He is a master of logic. It is this, in fact, which makes him so severely and definitely atheistic, even while he denounces atheism as an intellectual attitude or habit. He wishes to dispose of the ideas of God and Christ once for all—to get them, so to speak, out of the way. The rejection of such ideas is, in his view, a condition *sine qua non* of the complete acceptance of his own system. He proposes that system, in its integrity, only to those whom he calls "emancipated"—to those, that is, who have wholly ceased to believe in God. All "theologists," he declares in one of his later writings, are "at once belated and a source of trouble."

It is the unreserved completeness and systematic character of Comte's atheism that make him, as we have said, pre-eminently representative of the modern mind, as it breaks away from the Catholic Order. But it is not on this side only that he represents it. The modern mind is, as we have seen, and as it is essential to recognize, not merely revolutionary. It is not simply destructive ; it is largely and

Positivism
and Atheism.

Evolution
and
Revolution.

increasingly constructive. It is ever pressing forward into new areas of light and power. We cannot say that the sciences of astronomy and biology are, in themselves, revolutionary. They are a wide and illuminating revelation of the natural order; they are a systematized and verified interpretation of real experience. In proportion, however, as such interpretations come into conflict, or seem to come into conflict, with those interpretations of experience which were worked into the doctrinal structure of Catholicism, they necessarily, for a time and within limits, have an effect of disturbance and displacement. It would be absurd to say that the heliocentric view of man's world is in itself destructive or revolutionary, yet it represents one of the most momentous changes that the human spirit has ever undergone, and, in reference to the geocentric view, this change has been a revolution.

Such a change as this, however—a change in which the human mind passes from a sort of chrysalis condition into a fuller exercise of life and faculty—is improperly represented by the word “revolution,” used simply as a term of loss or rejection. It is a change of unfolding or development. Atheism, however—considered, as we have all along considered it, as the rejection of God in Christ, and of the Catholic Order as built upon that conception—is not a change of this kind. If the sense of Christ passes out of a man's consciousness, and if he ceases, as a consequence, to have the imagination and habits of worship, and so to form part of the spiritual society of Christendom, then that, in itself, is not a change of unfolding or development; it is a revolution in the sense of rejection or privation, and this none the less because it may be partly due to a concomitant change of a positive and constructive character. The study of geology may give us large and sure views of the antiquity of the earth, and of the nature and disposition of its various strata, and this, relatively to former conceptions of the earth, may be a positive gain in knowledge and power; but if, as a consequence of this

gain, we feel, however mistakenly, that the Bible, for us, has ceased to possess a spiritual value, and then that, in the region of religion, is a destructive revolution—a loss which, relatively to the aims and instruments of religion, has not been accompanied by any compensating advantage.

Now, Auguste Comte, who represents the modern spirit on the side of atheism, or the religious revolution, represents

Comte's Constructive Genius.	it also on the side of science, or positive acquisition. His atheism is, as we have seen, largely scientific—is due especially to the effect upon his
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mind of the accumulated results and developed methods of science. It is, further, the atheism of a constructive genius, which is instinctively impatient with a merely partial or special view of things, and is always pressing forward towards completeness and synthesis. His atheism, therefore, is never a central interest with him. It is not a goal; it is a point of departure. His true goal—which is constantly becoming clearer to his view, and is ever attracting him forward—is the universal unification of Humanity, in feeling, thought, and life, and a unification of such a kind that it will embrace the whole past of man, as well as his future. In proportion as he pursues this lofty aim—and it is his unswerving pursuit of it through all changes and difficulties that gives him his intellectual distinction, and imparts heroic nobleness and harmony to his life—he finds himself carried again into that region which he once believed himself—and not himself only, but all the advanced minds of the world—to have left for ever behind: he is carried into the region of religion. In following after human completeness—a unified synthesis of knowledge, love, and life—he is led to recognize that there can be no real completeness apart from religion; that religion, in fact, rightly understood, is itself a synthesis, and the only true synthesis.

He is helped to the apprehension of this great truth by various concurrent influences. One of these influences is his own spiritual disposition. In spite of serious moral

lapses and imperfections, and his theoretic rejection of religion, he preserved throughout his life—what is always the essential mark of the religious nature—the sense of an ideal spiritual perfection, which has indefeasible claims upon the conscience. Auguste Comte was bred in a Catholic household by a religious-minded mother. The effect of this training, as he himself eventually recognized, was never completely dissipated. Christ, Whom in principle he rejected, continued to live and work in him as a restraining and preserving power. His re-discovery of religion, therefore, or what he himself considered to be the “foundation” of a “new religion,” is, in fact, the reassertion of the spiritual force of Catholicism, and therefore of Christ, in his soul. He undergoes a change analogous to what, in evangelical language, is known as “conversion.” He begins a daily reading of the “Imitation” and of the “Divine Comedy.” According to his own conceptions, as they gradually shape themselves into some sort of definiteness, and with a character conditioned and confused by persisting revolutionary influences, he resumes the practice of prayer. He labours, too, at the rehabilitation of his own moral conceptions and conduct.

This re-birth of Catholicism in Comte’s mind stamps a definite character upon the whole of the construction which he regards as a “new religion.” This construction is, in fact, largely a vindication, in positive terms of the modern analytic reason, of most of the principal conceptions, words, and institutions of the Catholic spiritual order—Supreme Being, soul, immortality, faith, submission, worship, prayer, sacrament, priesthood, Church, and Papacy. In his historical philosophy, he is the defender of the Catholic Church against its critics. He is almost always on the side of “orthodoxy,” and never of “heterodoxy.” He looks upon Protestantism as a serious evil. He gives no religious place to Protestants, as such—with the solitary exception of the Quakers—in his scheme of historic commemoration. He is

His Religious
Conceptions.

especially hostile to individualism and the right of private judgment. His dislike to the "modern revolution"—which he regards as distinctively characterized by the revolt of the individual against Humanity, of the living against the dead, of inferiors against superiors—increases in proportion to his own escape from it, and his personal demands upon the loyalty of his adherents. Eventually he divides the modern world into those who are for religion and those who are against it. He declares that the worst of religions is better than no religion, and advises his followers not to marry a person without religion. He attempts to promote a universal "Religious League," for the preservation of social life from the disruptive force of moral and intellectual anarchy. He provides in his will for the payment of a subscription to the Catholic Church in France, when disestablished, as a mark of sympathy and co-operation with it. He declares that faith ought to control investigation; that poetry must be ranked higher than science; that the objective method in reasoning needs to be supplemented by the subjective; that the ultimate or "positive" state of the human mind must preserve the disposition of its "fetishistic" or earliest "theologic" state; and he ends by condensing the whole of his religious system in the idea of a "Trinity," constituted by Space, the Earth, and Humanity, and by symbolizing Humanity itself, considered as the Supreme Being, by an image derived from the Catholic conception of the Virgin Mother.

It would, of course, be perfectly easy to ridicule this construction as a mere parody of Catholicism. Such

His Defects
and Achievements.

a judgment of it, however, would be both superficial and unjust. A parody is meant to be a parody. Comte's "new religion," or "Religion of Humanity," is certainly, in this sense, no parody, although it may undoubtedly have an effect of parody on the minds of some who have not been able to enter into its principles and motives. In Comte's mind—a mind, from first to last, profoundly, and even austere-

serious—his religious system is an attempt to bring a complete and high unity into the life of mankind. It represents a titanic effort to deliver himself and others from the perils of the modern religious revolution—a disorder of which he has a deeper sense and an incomparably surer estimate than any contemporary thinker. What we may justly say about it—and this is one of the chief grounds of our present concern with it—is that it is a product of the revolution, and that to the last it carries the stamp of the revolution upon it. It begins and it ends with atheism. It begins and it ends without Christ. It is an attempt to give the things of Christ without giving Christ Himself. It is, as has been rightly said of it—at any rate, so far as forms and words are concerned—“Catholicism minus Christianity.” It is not a parody; it is a paradox.

It is here that we see Comte's relation and affinity with some of those other religious revolutionaries of whom we have already spoken—with the atheists and “ethicists” who use hymns and readings in their public meetings, and with the agnostic socialists who assemble in a “Labour Church.” He, like them, is not satisfied to be simply a revolutionary. He is not satisfied with science alone, or with art, or with literature, or politics, or even with merely didactic ethics, in the representation and direction of life; he demands something that may, in some measure, take the place of Christ and Catholicism. His genius, however, is too wide and profound for him to be satisfied with some small remnant of the Christian cultus. He has, too, not been nourished in a Protestant sect, with its truncated liturgy, its disproportionate self-assertion, its somewhat circumscribed social outlook. He is a child of Catholicism, having the sense of its universality and historic greatness. He is, moreover, a master of synthesis and philosophic co-ordination. Therefore his substitute for Catholicism has the scale and proportions of Catholicism itself. It is, indeed, not enough to say this. In so far

as it is possible for him to escape from the trammels of his revolutionary paradoxes—in so far, in other words, as it is possible for him to be at once an atheist and a Catholic, and to restore the Catholic spiritual order while rejecting Christ, Who is its originating and central force—in so far as he is able to do this, he not only in feeling recovers Catholicism, but re-establishes it on grounds of positive reason, and shows it the way to a place and influence in the life of man such as it has ever claimed but never yet possessed. He accomplishes this great task indirectly, indeed, and in part unconsciously, but he accomplishes it none the less surely, within the limits which his persisting atheism imposes upon him.

This task, in fact, is forced upon him by the very nature of his situation and aims. It is his object to bring about, not a unification only, but a high religious unification of the whole mind and life of Humanity. In the prosecution of this purpose he is inevitably carried back to Catholicism, as a supreme type of spiritual order, and he finds himself called upon to furnish, in modern analytic terms of positive reason, an explanation and justification of its master words and institutions. The result is a re-statement and re-affirmation of Catholicism such as may serve to show its foundations in real experience, and put an end to the scientific revolt against it by giving to it, so far as its greater religious purposes are concerned, the authority of science itself. It is, of course, only within definite limits that this great task is accomplished. Comte never fully—in phrase and intention at least—escapes from his atheism. To the last it hangs as a millstone about his neck. Nevertheless, his synthetic genius is so wide, and his spiritual instincts are so deep and sure, that he not only gives us a large and suggestive positive argument for all the great things of Catholicism, except the greatest, but in doing this he helps to show how for the greatest also such an argument may be found, and how Catholicism, entering into alliance with the progressive mind of

Humanity, may fulfil its characteristic mission in the world, and bring in at last the universality of Christ.

The special importance of Comte's work for our present purpose is, as we have seen, this: that it gives us, Aspects and
Effects of
Revolution. better than the work of any other thinker, an index and mirror of the modern religious revolution carried to its last conclusions, while at the same time indicating, directly and indirectly, how that revolution may be transcended, and how the Catholic spiritual order may be not only, in all its high essentials, rationally reaffirmed, but wrought into a completeness and living efficacy such as it has never yet reached. Considering the revolution, as it exhibits itself in him and other representatives of it, we see that it presents itself with certain definite forms and characteristics. First, it exists as a purely negative atheism, empirical or systematic—an entire rejection of Christ and the Catholic Order. Such a negative atheism may be associated with large positive developments and acquisitions in the regions of philosophy, science, politics, ethics, and the arts; but it is, all the same, atheism. It means the disavowal of Christ; it means the disavowal of worship and prayer; and it preserves this character none the less surely because it may happen to be the atheism of a man of large genius and culture, or of a lofty spirit, touched with a passion for social good.

Secondly, the atheism of the revolution may not be wholly satisfied simply with an entire and blank rejection of the Catholic Order; it may seek to preserve some of the forms and methods of that Order for the expression of its moral sentiments, and return to "churches" and hymns, even while rejecting Catholicism, and Christ, its foundation. Such an atheism may vary in its conceptions and processes from what we have called "ethicism" or the socialism of a "Labour Church," following the traditions of a Protestant Dissenting sect, to the "religious Positivism" of Auguste Comte, the construction of a great scientific and synthetic genius, informed by the spiritual temper, falling largely

back upon the fulness of Catholicism, and, in the attempt to establish a "new religion," actually working out a new justification for the old.

Thirdly, we may see in these atheistic substitutes for the Catholic Order what has been characteristic of all substitutes for it since the outbreak of the Reformation—a smaller thing put in the place of a greater. Protestantism, and what, for want of a better name, we must call religious atheism, are by no means, as we have seen, the same thing, and it would be a signal and gross injustice to confound them. Protestantism offers men Jesus Christ, and atheism is, as we have also seen, not less prevalent in Catholic countries than in Protestant. That fact it is necessary to bear in mind. "Private judgment" is a distinctive note of Protestantism, and private judgment, according to Auguste Comte, is the essential note of the modern religious revolution, yet atheism is certainly rampant in countries where private judgment, as a doctrine, has scarcely been preached.

While this is true, however, it is also true that Protestantism and "religious atheism" have this in common—that, relatively to the Catholic spiritual order, they both, as modes of the modern revolution, substitute a lower good for a higher. Protestantism—with the exception, perhaps, of the Protestantism of the Quakers—did not wholly disavow form and beauty in worship; it contented itself with setting up something that had less form and beauty in the place of something that had more. In the field of worship—the central, significant sphere of religion—it gave men, both in conception and expression, a smaller good than Catholicism had given them. It did not, in rendering homage to God, profess to disdain "temples made with hands," but, when it began to build its own temples, either built them devoid of grace and nobility, or brought them back to beauty by bringing them, as far as it could, back to Catholicism. These things, of course, Protestantism itself eventually recognized. It has become increasingly conscious of its

own ugliness, just as it has become increasingly conscious of its own spiritual limitations, due to its partial rejection of the Catholic Order; and its later history has been the history of a gradual, awkward, incomplete recovery, in the spheres either of conception or of expression, of things which, three hundred and fifty years ago, it threw away.

Exactly the same thing is true of religious atheism. So long as atheism is simply and nakedly intellectual, it avoids such difficulties and complications. Science, philosophy, art, and politics, have their own greatness, their own form and beauty. They have the form and beauty of a high construction of the human spirit—the order and harmony of large prescience and a controlling will. A House of Parliament, or a town-hall, or a school, or a theatre, or a dwelling-house, in which men do not profess to worship, but to live and to teach or work—these, of course, may receive their own sufficient stamp of beauty. When atheism, however, strives to remain, or to become, “religious,” and tries to possess itself of a “church” and of something that may take the place of “worship,” it finds, what Protestantism has found, that the spiritual order of Catholicism, founded on Christ and centred in temples of imperishable beauty, is the high controlling model against which it must measure itself. We may choose religion or refuse it, but if we choose it, then the supreme and classic things of religion have the same natural title to govern us as the supreme and classic things of art or science, when once we have decided to enter their spheres. What we choose must either be greater than Catholicism or less. So far, what men have chosen in religion instead of Catholicism has not been greater than Catholicism; it has been less; it has, in fact, been Catholicism stripped, in varying degree, of its characteristic strength and beauty.

CHAPTER V

THE HUMAN FUTURE IN RELIGION

WE are now able to gain for ourselves a measure of what may be called the human situation in religion—that situation which has been created by the development of the modern revolution, considered, in its ultimate expression, as the complete rejection of the Catholic spiritual order. This situation, so far as the human future is concerned, offers us, broadly speaking, two conceivable alternatives: either that future will be atheistic—either it will complete the rejection of God in Christ and of Christ in Catholicism—or it will be religious, and religious in the sense of continuing and developing Catholicism, as the social representation and fulfilment of Christ. The study of the modern religious revolution, from its first open negative expression in Protestantism down to its consummation as atheism, shows us that everything between these two terms—everything between the organic spiritual order of Catholicism and its total overthrow—may, for scientific purposes, be neglected. Men may refuse religion, but if they choose it, sooner or later, and in whatever degree, they will rest, not in Protestantism, or in “religious atheism,” but in Catholicism.

Now, these alternatives we are bound to consider in a scientific temper. It is one of Comte’s signal merits as a thinker—a merit that distinguishes him amongst all his contemporaries—that he helps us to do this. He looks out boldly and broadly upon the human future, and forms in

regard to it an ordered forecast. He is not concerned with speculations as to ultimate origins—cosmic, biological, or Biblical. He is concerned with the actual order of the universe, and with the life of mankind as a part of it. He sees man planted upon his planet, and there fulfilling his social destiny. He is not arrested by half-truths or compromises. He is a synthetic thinker, because he is, in spite of his atheism, a religious thinker—a thinker who puts himself at the point of view of religion; and, lifting himself above all the complications of the present, he tries to deduce the future fate of Humanity upon earth from the sum of its past experiences and efforts. Such an attempt has a high value of intellectual enlargement and prescience, quite apart from any special conclusions to which it may immediately, in a given case, lead.

From the point of view of such a scientific expectation or forecast—for prediction, in the strict sense of the word,

Hypothesis
of an
Atheistic
Future.

is not a term that can properly be used in regard to phenomena which, from the nature of the case, are not recurrent and measurable—the future of man may be, as we have said, either atheistic or religious. Let us suppose it to be atheistic. In that case Christ, and Catholicism as the organ of Christ, will have passed from the life of Humanity. The Catholic spiritual order will have come to an end. Man will cease to be a being who worships and prays. The House of Parliament, the town hall, the Courts of Justice, the school, the theatre, the workshop, the dwelling-house—these, in one form or another, with, perhaps, the barracks, will remain; the church will have disappeared. We are not to assume that this atheistic world will be necessarily a world without order. It may have its own order. That order may be, like the order of medieval society, twofold—both spiritual and temporal. The temporal order would be represented, as at present, by what we call the “Government,” either political or industrial; the spiritual order would be represented by the teacher, using this word, of

course, in its widest possible acceptation, so as to include the poet, the artist, the man of letters, the orator, the philosopher, and the scientific thinker, as well as the schoolmaster.

This spiritual, or intellectual, order might be, according to its own standards or criteria, moral. Such a moral order, resting upon a definite community of ethical principle, might, of course, substantially continue and reaffirm the moral teaching of Catholicism — its teaching, for example, concerning the relations between the sexes. Atheism, even according to Christian standards, is not necessarily immoral. On the contrary, it may be highly moral. It may regard Christianity, and all other religions, as a natural but provisional expression of the human mind, helping to educate it for an “age of reason,” and, so to speak, gradually conducting it to a state in which man, by deliberate rational processes alone, will be able to keep himself in a condition of moral equilibrium, such as, in lower stages of human development, could only be maintained by worship and prayer. There are certainly many atheists—men of mind and culture, having a high sense of their human responsibilities—who take this view, an historic and relative view, of Christianity. They look upon it as a thing lapsed, or lapsing, but their attitude towards it is still one of respect, and even of gratitude for what they would describe as its “provisional services.” The past, they would say, naturally and properly belonged to “theology,” but the future belongs to science; and just as the truths of astronomy, chemistry, or biology work their way into the human mind by means of the teacher, and then, by their proper force, produce a due practical effect, so the principles of sociology and morals, once grasped by the reason, will successfully assert their own sovereignty, and maintain an order of conduct which may differ little from the Christian order, except that Christ, and worship and prayer as aids to the realization of Christ, will no longer have a place in it.

This respectable, decent, serious atheism—an atheism continuing Christianity on the practical side, while professing to reject it in theory and motive—may be conceived of as dominating the life of the future. But, of course, it may conceivably be dominated by an atheism of an entirely different kind—an atheism rejecting not merely what are called the “sanctions” of Catholicism, but also the moral temper and principles to which they give their support. That is the fundamental and decisive difference between the Catholic spiritual order and the atheism which disavows it. The Catholic Order, as such, stands for definite criteria of conduct in definite spheres—as, for instance, in regard to marriage and the relations between the sexes. Atheism, as such, does not. Catholicism has a plain doctrine of sin, and resolves this general term “sin” into a number of specific feelings and actions. Atheism, in itself, has no doctrine of sin. A Catholic, as such, cannot believe that polygamy is an open question, or that human maternity is not a sacred and beautiful function. An atheist, as such, may hold any opinion he pleases upon these questions. He is, in relation to such matters, carried back to the beginning of things, and perhaps employs the processes of modern individual analysis to restore the freedom of the primitive savage. He may end by reaffirming, on his own responsibility, the Catholic ideal of marriage; but he may also end by proclaiming the principle of promiscuous intercourse, or by asserting that the relations between the sexes ought to be dissolved at pleasure. If he does so, it is not necessarily, as it is essential to remember, because he is himself mastered by what we now call licentious instincts. As it is hardly necessary to say, a Catholic who considers that marriage is a sacrament may in practice profane it, while an atheist who holds that it is, in principle, a relation of convenience and pleasure, which ought to be terminable by mutual consent, may be actually stainless and constant in conduct.

Anarchic
Atheism.

The difference between them which we are now considering—the difference between the Catholic Order and a state of individualistic atheism or anarchy—is that the one acknowledges a spiritual and social law, and therefore can sin against it and come under judgment, and that the other, knowing no law, can do no wrong. Such an atheist as we are now supposing is, in fact, a sort of Antinomian, except that he puts, perhaps, the principle of liberty in the place of the doctrine of justification. We cannot, of course, suppose a society atheistic in the sense of disavowing what we may call an elementary political and economic order. Such a society could not exist. Of the Ten Commandments, two at least—the prohibitions of murder and theft—would doubtless have to be observed, in principle, even under atheism. The others, however, might be considered to have lapsed. We may conceive an order of social life sufficient, if the expression may be allowed, for an irreducible minimum of practical purpose—sufficient, for example, to secure the fulfilment of contracts, and to prevent violent attacks upon life and property. Such an order—assuming that the opinions on which it rested were common and stable—would be, within its limits, real, and would, perhaps, provide a basis for an individualism free, in other respects, to follow its own impulses. In this condition of things—if so apparently extravagant a hypothesis may be permitted—all the moral ideas developed in the ancient theocracies and in Christendom would be eliminated, and men, so far as the lower exigencies of the social state allowed it, would revert to the instincts and lawlessness of the savage, exempt, however, from the superstitious and ignorant fears by which he was sometimes restrained.

It may be held that the supposition of an atheism such as this—an atheism by the working of which the discipline of social restraint would be reduced to the lowest terms of a bare economic and material exigency—is chimerical and fantastic. To this we may

Its Reality.

reply—first, that Auguste Comte, who was the founder of sociology, and who, during forty years, underwent, as fully as any modern thinker, the force of the religious revolution, held that this revolution, if we could suppose it to proceed unchecked, would bring about widespread insanity and the dissolution of human society; secondly, that any competent observer, in sufficient relation with our contemporary thought and literature, can easily prove for himself that an atheism such as we have supposed—an atheism which practically disavows all ideas of spiritual rule and discipline—is now actually, and on a large scale, at work in the minds of men and women. Its manifestation is, of course, a thing of degree. It is sometimes subtle and impalpable; it is sometimes “naked and not ashamed.” In any case, we are bound, in the first instance, to study it as we study any other fact within the province of science. We must see things as they are. If a disruptive and lawless atheism, such as we have supposed, is, in fact, diffusing itself, it is as useless simply to denounce it, or to try and forcibly suppress it, as it would be to apply these methods to the variations of the weather, or to cancer and pneumonia, or to actual insanity. Even if we hold, as some would hold, that what we have here called atheism—the loss or repudiation of Christ, the cessation of worship and prayer—is due to mere stupidity or the working of an evil will—still, against these intellectual or moral forces anger and abuse are useless. The will must somehow be changed; the mind must somehow be illumined. The physician does not denounce the disease or the patient; it is his office to cure or prevent, and to this office he applies himself with the necessary attention and methods. It is not sufficient to say that our various Christian teachers and authorities—from the head of the Catholic Church down to the humblest of Protestant ministers—ought now to adopt a similar process; they must either adopt it, or fail. They must either adopt it, or aggravate the very disorder which they wish to end.

But the supposition that the human future will be completely atheistic—and atheistic either with a certain reaffirmation and continuance of Christian ethics, or with a subversion of the Catholic spiritual order limited merely by the barest exigencies of the social state—this, as we have seen, is only one of two alternatives which our modern situation presents to us. We may also suppose that the future of man will continue to be, what, on a total survey, his past has been, progressively religious. It is from the standpoint of this assumption that we are at present considering the relation of Catholicism to the modern mind. It is an assumption of a scientific character. It is based on experience—on the experience, not of one age, or of one sphere of man's mind and effort alone, but on the substantially uniform experience of the entire human race. So far as that experience has proceeded, we are entitled to say that no community of men has ever existed without a religion, variable as the ideas and forms of religion have been. Consequently, when Auguste Comte lays down, as he does, the sociological proposition that "there can be no society without a religion," he must be held to have the warrant of the practically unbroken experience of mankind, and most of all of mankind as it has entered the higher planes of civilization. Therefore, the supposition that the human future will be atheistic, although it is one which, scientifically, we are bound to consider, and even to place in full relief, can only be regarded as valid on the hypothesis that the nature and needs of man in future will be fundamentally different from his nature and needs throughout the past—that, in fact, we are now entering upon a stage in the life of mankind when there will be such a solution of moral and intellectual continuity, such a complete effacement of our human identity, as has never before been known.

In spite of the development of what we have here called the modern religious revolution—a revolution which we have ultimately resolved into an anarchic atheism—there is

no real justification for the view that there will be such a rupture as this in man's mental life. By the modern religious revolution we mean, in general terms, and in the phraseology of Auguste Comte, the insurrection of the present against the past, or of the individual against Humanity. Such a revolt, however, by the nature of the case, can only proceed and become effectual within definite limits. By Humanity, in the widest extension of that term, we understand the entire collective life of mankind, past, present, and future. When, however, we are considering the relation between the individual life and the life of Humanity, we mean especially by Humanity the whole organic body of our predecessors—of what we call the past or the dead. It is in relation to Humanity, in this conception of it, that any given generation, or the Present, lives and works. Now, it is clear not only that Humanity, thus understood, actually exercises an ever-increasing sway over each individual soul which comes into the world, in proportion to its life and development, but that it is one of the chief acknowledged objects of human policy, for certain specific purposes, to indefinitely extend this sway. It is, for example, the main object of what we call education, or culture. Leaving religion, for the moment, out of account, we may say, speaking broadly, that the great results of the life of Humanity fall into three main categories. These categories are art, science, politics. Each of these terms we here employ in its largest sense. By art we mean all the great æsthetic arts—poetry, music, painting, sculpture, architecture; under the head of science we include philosophy, the two words, as is well known, having often been practically synonymous; by politics we understand the ordering of man's social relations, domestic, civic, national and international, and also of his industrial activity.

Now, using these three capital terms in this extended and comprehensive sense, we may say not only that in art, science, and politics each individual mind, precisely in the degree in which it lives and develops, inevitably comes

under the sway of Humanity, but that it is the chief object of culture to bring it beneath that sway, and to indefinitely extend it. The individual man, in fact, either as a physical or an intellectual being, lives with the life of Humanity, and in proportion as he does not so live, he dies. The life of the individual man, of course, is a thing of degree. It may be life in what we call a low plane or a high. It is not absolutely necessary that a man, for the elementary purposes of a bare subsistence, should enter far into the domains of art, science, and politics ; and if he enters them, he may, of course, keep well within the limits determined by the exigencies of elementary, self-preservation under given conditions of social life. There are, as we all know, large numbers of men and women for whom " life " means little more than breathing, eating, drinking, begetting, sleeping, clothing themselves, housing themselves, and procuring for themselves the requisites of such an existence. There are others, perhaps a much larger number, living on a somewhat higher plane, but one which is still far from the highest. The relation of the individual man to the life of Humanity is, in fact, substantially the same as his relation to the order of external nature. We commonly say that we must all " obey the laws of nature," but a man is not actually bound to obey them, in the sense of living in willing and intelligent subordination to them. Many men and women, for example, habitually disregard the known laws or conditions of physical health. Every year, too, a certain number of persons commit suicide—a voluntary act by which a man withdraws himself, as a conscious organism, from the dominion of law.

Exactly in the same way, a man may abstain from entering into that higher life in Humanity which is represented by the three great categories of art, science, and politics. What we call the " average man," in fact, enters into that life in a very low degree, whether from incapacity, or from a sort of intellectual inertia, or from unwillingness, or from the want of opportunity. There are, too, a

certain number of persons who may be described as revolutionaries or sectaries of culture—men who, like Darwin, lose the power of appreciating Shakespeare, or who, like Herbert Spencer, find Homer uninteresting, or who disparage a classic education in the interests of “science,” or who exalt the classics at the expense of scientific knowledge.

The truth, however, remains that human life, whether in a low plane or a high—whether for the purposes of an elementary physical self-preservation or for the purposes of a full intellectual equipment and development—is life lived in inevitable subordination to Humanity, a subordination varying only in degree and effect, and that it is a principal object of human culture in the three fields of art, science, and politics to indefinitely extend this subordination. In other words, in regard to art, science, and politics—allowing for such exceptions as those to which we have just referred—we do not attempt to challenge or reverse the achievement of Humanity; on the contrary, we accept it, and rest in it. It becomes the point of departure of our own individual life and effort. We say not only that art, science, and politics are great permanent interests of man, but that what is done in future in these high spheres of the human mind must be done with reference to what has already been accomplished in them. We may, in a certain degree, decline to enter them at all, but if we enter them, not only do we come under the natural government and authority of what is greatest in them, but we gain for ourselves an ever-increasing power of discerning and choosing what is thus greatest, and of living an enhanced and progressive life in relation to it. If a man attempted to disregard or nullify the control of Humanity in these three spheres of its mind and achievement, he would be pronounced to be hopelessly ignorant or insane.

But if it is true that Humanity governs in the three great fields of art, science, and politics, and that in submission to this government—a submission not passive and

apathetic, but discriminating and active—the individual man finds his life enriched and intensified, while in a rejection of it he is proportionately impoverished, then it is not less true that Humanity also governs in the sphere of religion, and that in this sphere likewise it must be a determining purpose of human culture to bring men into living and fructifying acceptance of its rule. We are not bound to come, in any high degree, under the government of Humanity in religion, any more than we are thus bound to come under its government in art, science, or politics, or any more than we are bound to submit to the “laws of nature.” We may be atheists, just as we may remain ignorant, or just as we may be suicides. An atheist is, in fact, consciously or unconsciously, a spiritual suicide. He ceases to live in the highest sphere of human life—the sphere of religion. He has passed out of the life in Christ. He may go on living, in a sense and in degree, in art, science, and politics, but in religion he dies. He dies, too, much more surely and completely in rejecting the rule of Humanity in religion than he would in rejecting its rule in art, science, or politics. These three interests of man are certainly high and indispensable, but it cannot be said that they are as universal an interest as religion. We may hold, as the atheist holds, that Christianity is lapsed or lapsing, but it is impossible to hold that it has not, historically, been an interest common to all classes of human beings. Christ has been, in principle, supreme to the King and to the beggar, to the saint and to the philosopher, to the artist and to the worker. The chief concern of religion is conduct, or man’s relation to goodness, and this is a concern which touches all classes of the community, and touches them all through life, and at every moment of life. Consequently, if we die, or refuse the life of Humanity, in religion—or if we live in it a life limited and impoverished—the result is much more certain and disastrous than if, to use our former word, we are simply revolutionaries or sectaries of culture.

If, however, we dismiss the supposition that the future of mankind will be atheistic, and hold the contrary view that, by the essential persistence of human nature and the inevitable ascendancy of Humanity and Catholicism. Humanity over the individual, this future will be religious, then by this principle we are carried back once more to the conclusion which we have already stated—that the future of mankind belongs to Catholicism, or, to use a plainer but equivalent word, to the Catholic Church. Religion in the mind of a philosopher, reaching a formal generalization by processes of analysis, may, of course, exist simply as an abstraction. He defines it, to his own satisfaction, in one way or another. But in the life of mankind it does not so exist. It exists as a living and organized force ; and it exists in a particular age and place in one or other of a number of definite forms. Religion in Western Europe exists as Catholicism—either as that complete, coherent Catholicism which is represented to us by the spiritual order of the Middle Ages, or in the incomplete and conflicting forms into which that order has been broken up by the disruptive processes of Protestantism and atheism. The true human policy in religion is, as we have seen, in principle the same as the true human policy in art, science, and politics—not only to acquiesce in the ascendancy of Humanity, for the purposes of a high individual life, but, employing definite criteria of value, to deliberately extend that ascendancy. In Western Europe, therefore, and ultimately throughout the world, the true human policy in religion is to deliberately extend the ascendancy of the Catholic Church.

It may be said by some that if we so regard the Catholic Church—if, that is, we derive its title to govern the future from the fact that it has, in so high a plane and with so noble a result, actually governed the past—we are giving to it a lower authority and sanction than that which it has been accustomed to claim for itself. The nature of our present problem, however, forces us upon this point of

view. That problem is, recognizing the character and extent of the modern religious revolution, to so strengthen and develop Catholicism that it may have the power to put an end to the revolution, and to bring in the universality of Christ, for the good of the world. For the purposes of so lofty and beneficent an aim, we must see things as they are—what the Catholic Church is, what the world outside the Church is, and what is its actual relation to the various forces, favourable or unfavourable, which affect its human mission. Further, we must recognize that no Church can ultimately possess any other title than that which Humanity accords to it. This truth, obvious as it is, is not sufficiently borne in mind by the adherents of our various religious bodies. The smallest of Christian sects—let us say, for example, such a community as the “Catholic Apostolic Church”—makes substantially the same claim for itself as is made by the Catholic Church. It is, however, not the claim which the members of a Church make for it that is important, so far as its human and social position is concerned, but the extent to which that claim has actually been accepted and ratified by Humanity. The Anglican Church calls itself the “Church of England.” As a matter of fact, of course, it is not now, nor has it ever been, in a position to sustain even this title. Still less is it able to justify its claim to be “Catholic.” It is no more Catholic than the King of England is, what he is still styled upon our coins, the “Defender of the Faith.” It is certainly a great and imposing community, which has unquestionable and high claims upon our veneration and gratitude; but it is, nevertheless, only one of a number of Protestant sects, current, to a certain extent, within the limits of the United Kingdom and of British colonization. No claims which its members make for it can, in themselves, ever give to it an authority other than this.

But exactly the same thing is true of the Catholic Church; it is true, that is, that it derives its title, for practical purposes, from the assent and ratification of Humanity.

A Church calling itself universal—as we have seen that the most obscure of Protestant sects may do—and yet not able to number more than an insignificant number of adherents, is, of course, involved in a contradiction. Nevertheless, the word “Catholicism,” even although it may sometimes be misapplied, has a high value. It points us to an ideal of religious unity and universality. It carries with it, too, a recognition of the truth that there can be no universality apart from the actual acceptance and ratification of Humanity. The Roman Church is, of course, the only one which has a true title to call itself Catholic. It represents the unbroken spiritual order of the Middle Ages. It is international. It has preserved an essential continuity for many centuries. It holds, and has ever held, the high spiritual principle of universality, which is Christ. Nevertheless, its Catholicity, real and great as it is, is limited, both in space and time. It obviously does not extend beyond Christendom. Within the bounds of Christendom itself it has been progressively decreased by the separation of the Greek Church and by the rise of Protestantism and atheism. Protestantism will not now increase. It has spent its force. If atheism increases—as, within definite limits of time and space, it may easily do—the universality of the Catholic Church must be still further circumscribed. Therefore, what we may perhaps, in this connection, call the principle of Humanity—the patent principle, namely, that all Churches claiming to take a part in the actual government of human affairs are dependent for their title and power upon the degree in which they are actually accepted by Humanity, and this especially as Humanity enters the higher planes of mind and life—such a principle is so far from being one which we can set aside in considering the place of Catholicism in the modern world that the Catholic Church, by its very position and claims, pre-eminently makes an appeal to it, and places it in strong relief.

CHAPTER VI

CATHOLICISM AND THE MODERN MIND

WE come, then, to this conclusion—that the human future, if it is to be religious, belongs to the Catholic Church, and this in virtue of the fact that, holding the principle of spiritual universality, which is Christ, it represents, in a pre-eminent sense, that power of Humanity to which, in proportion as we ascend in the scale of life, we must all inevitably submit, and from which, in the last resort, and in whatever degree, all human authority is derived. So soon, however, as we place ourselves at this point of view, we are, as we have seen, carried to a recognition of the truth that the Catholic Church, while it does thus pre-eminently represent the power of Humanity in the sphere of religion, still represents it only within definite limits of time and space. It does not directly, and according to its own conception of itself, include within the sphere of its universality the Humanity of the ancient world beyond the borders of Judaism ; it does not include in it the Humanity of Mohammedanism ; it does not include in it the Humanity of the Greek and Protestant Churches ; and there is, as we have also seen, a large and enlarging part of our modern Humanity which is involved in a revolutionary movement against it, as against all other Christian Churches, and is passing into a state of atheism. Therefore, although the Catholic Church, by its very position and claims, makes a natural appeal to the principle of Humanity, it cannot be said, up to the present, to have won for itself a title to completely represent Humanity in the

sphere of religion, while at the same time such title as it has actually secured, valid and supreme as it is, is more and more endangered by the development of the modern religious revolution. In other words, its Catholicism is not only incomplete, but is less than it once was. It has so far failed to give to the world, what it is certainly its mission to give to it, a universal unity in Christ.

Now, the principle upon which we are proceeding in these pages is that the Catholic Church has a natural power—a

The Task of
Catholicism.

power which no other Church possesses—to establish this universal religious unity in Christ. To do this, however, it must, as we set out by saying, bring within the scope of its Catholicism those spheres and interests of the life of Humanity which at present, according to our common conception, lie without it. It must, in theory, bring into it the ancient world, Western and Eastern, lying beyond the bounds of Judaism, and even Judaism itself, in a sense in which it has not yet been incorporated in Christianity; it must bring in Moham-medanism; it must bring in the Greek Church; it must bring in the Protestant Churches; it must bring in—not, of course, the modern revolution, considered as a negation of Christ and the Catholic Order, for that would be absurd, but what really give to the modern revolution its force and title—the positive conquests and methods of the modern mind.

Let us, for the present, leave out of account the Humanity of the non-Christian world and of the Greek and Protestant Churches. The real task of the Catholic Church—that task on the discharge of which the fulfilment of its mission of universality eventually depends—is the task of bringing the modern mind within its range. If it succeeds in this task, it will afterwards have no difficulty, if such an expression may be allowed, in going back upon the ancient European world and making it its own; it will have no difficulty, either, in reconciling to itself the existing non-Christian communities, together with the Greek and Protestant Churches. The way to the fulfilment of itself—to the

establishment of a complete religious universality in Christ—is through the mastery and possession of the modern mind. When it thus possesses that mind, it will fully possess the power which we have seen to be indispensable to a high individual life—the power of a governing and vitalizing Humanity.

Here, however, it is necessary that we should give to the words “modern mind,” or “modern Humanity,” when

<p>Meaning of the Word “Modern.”</p>	<p>used in this connection, a definite meaning. The term “modern” is, as has already been pointed out, often loosely and vaguely used, even in serious discussions. Sometimes we employ it to represent what is simply contemporary—or perhaps even only the latest phases of contemporary experience—and this in a restrictive or exclusive sense; sometimes we use it to denote a large historic period. It is essential, when we are trying to determine the relation of the Catholic Church to the modern mind, to rescue the word from these variations of meaning, and to give to it, as far as possible, a sure and exact connotation. It is mainly, of course, a word of Western history. It is not usual to employ it in reference to the East. European life, we are accustomed to say, falls broadly into the three great epochs of ancient, medieval, and modern. These three epochs, explicitly or implicitly, we fix in relation to Christ, Who is the central historic point of our civilization. The ancient world, we may broadly say—without concerning ourselves, at present, with any exact limits of time—is that which preceded and prepared His human kingdom; the medieval world is that which—outwardly, at least, and within the bounds of Western development—established and consolidated it; the modern world may be considered, according to the point of view at which we place ourselves, as either a gradual unfolding and perfection of it, under conditions of apparent disruption and complication, or as a progressive dissolution of it.</p>
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In our common conception of it, “modern history” begins

with the outbreak of Protestantism; according to Auguste Comte, it ought rather to be dated from the commencement of the fourteenth century. His reason for fixing on this historic point is important when we are trying to determine what we mean by the "modern mind," or "modern Humanity," in relation to the Catholic spiritual order. We have, throughout these pages, constantly spoken of the modern religious revolution as the complete rejection of that order; and we have considered it in its two main stages or forms, Protestant and atheistic. It is, however, important to recognize in this connection—what has already been pointed out—that the words "modern" and "revolutionary" are not necessarily synonymous, if by revolutionary we denote merely a process of rejection or negation. The establishment of the Copernican system may have had, for certain minds and for a certain length of time, an effect of disturbance and dissent, not merely, as was inevitable, in reference to the Ptolemaic system which it replaced, but in reference to those conceptions of the Catholic spiritual order which, as some supposed, were inextricably bound up with that system. The Copernican system, however, is in itself not negative or privative. It represents an immense expansion of the human mind, a profound and irrevocable change in man's view as to his position in the universe, a definite addition to the sum of his intellectual acquisitions. Whatever may have been its effect on that conception of the world which was woven into the structure of medieval Catholicism, such a result as this is, in itself, both positive and irreversible. We cannot now conceive the human mind as abandoning these acquisitions, or as going back from the point in its development which was thus attained. Therefore, if it were true that the Copernican system of the universe and the Catholic spiritual order, as founded on Christ were fundamentally irreconcilable, we should have to conclude that the Catholic spiritual order, and not the Copernican system, must disappear.

The reason why we should be forced upon such a conclusion is clear. The mind of Humanity is, as we have seen, for human and practical purposes, our final court of appeal. The Catholic Church itself can have no other, for if we could suppose the whole of mankind to do, what the greater portion of mankind has actually done—refuse or reject its teaching and jurisdiction—then its conceptions of God and Christ, of Scripture, of the Church itself, and of worship and prayer, would fall into desuetude. It is rightly said by the doctors of the Catholic Church that Christians cannot conceive of God Himself as having the power to abrogate the moral law—as being able to annul the distinction between right and wrong; and in the same way we cannot conceive of Him as annulling the law of gravitation, or as placing the mind of the twentieth century at the same point of view, objectively, as that of the thirteenth in regard to the physical order of the universe and man's place in it. It is for this reason that Comte fixes the beginning of modern history, not at the outbreak of Protestantism, but at the commencement of the fourteenth century. He fixes it there because, although he employs the term "revolution" to denote the movement of the Western mind which has characterized the last six centuries, he draws an indispensable distinction between the actual positive acquisitions due to that movement and the negative movement which in part has coincided with it, and which those acquisitions may or may not have helped.

The process of positive acquisition—an immense enlargement of the faculties and conquests of the human mind in the three great spheres of art, science, and politics—began long before the Protestant disruption, and has continued ever since. The Revival of Learning, the invention of printing, the discovery of America and Oceania, the use of gunpowder, the development of the sciences, from mathematics up to morals, the opening up of the stellar universe, the employment of the forces of steam and electricity, the

consequent bringing together of the various nations of mankind, the enormous expansion of industry, the growth of our urban population, and the rise of what we call "the people" in culture and political power—these and innumerable other changes have been brought about since the thirteenth century, and have, taken together, created a situation for the mind and life of man which we are no more able to alter than we are able to dislocate the solar system. To the six centuries during which this vast development of man's mind and power—a power over nature and human nature—has been effected, we give the name, relatively to the medieval and ancient worlds, of the modern period, and the result itself—so far as human intelligence is concerned—we call the Modern Mind. That is not a negative term, but a positive term. It represents an irreversible growth. Every individual soul that is now born into the world develops morally, intellectually, and practically under the influence of a vast sum of conditions, different, in many important respects, from those which acted on a mind of the thirteenth century.

But we should, of course, have an inadequate idea of the modern mind if we considered it only as an expression of the positive intellectual conquests of the last six centuries. The distinction which we are accustomed to draw between one period of history and another rests on recognizable and important differences, but it is not, as we all now know, absolute and fundamental. Human history is continuous. Ancient history, medieval history, and modern history are only one history. Humanity is an indivisible whole. This pagan Rome, in degree, was able to recognize. This St. Paul understood. This Eastern thought, in its own way, has grasped. This Pascal saw, when he declared that "the whole of mankind ought to be considered as one man, always living and always learning." This Carlyle affirmed. It was only reserved for Auguste Comte to give to this conception completeness and system, and so to make of it

Human
Continuity.

a potent force, capable of penetrating and illuminating every individual mind which comes within its range. According to this conception, the modern mind is not a mind discontinuous with the medieval mind, any more than the medieval mind was discontinuous with the ancient. Pascal's classic sentence stands : mankind is but as a single man, always living and always learning.

The modern mind, therefore, is only the medieval mind, emerging into a fuller consciousness of the universal order, including itself and its own powers, as a part of that order. The medieval mind, in the same way, is only the ancient mind developed on certain sides, and ordering itself in accordance with the sum of its acquisitions. The modern mind, consequently, when we consider it as fully developed, and as entering into the whole inheritance of human culture, contains within itself not only the distinctive acquisitions of the last six centuries, but the acquisitions also of the medieval and ancient worlds. The modern mind, further, which, as we have seen, is pre-eminently a Western mind, includes—a truth which it is of the utmost importance to recognize—the mind of the East. The modern mind, therefore, is both spontaneously and consciously synthetic. It holds within its scope all the accumulated results of human culture, moral, intellectual, and practical. It represents a true development or evolution, by which we can only mean an emergence or unfolding into ever fuller manifestation and power of forces which were primitively present. The Modern Mind, in a word, considered in its ideal integrity and completeness, represents the mind of Humanity.

We cannot, therefore, when we are trying to determine the relations between the Catholic Church and the modern mind, rightly use the latter expression as if it denoted merely an attitude and process of rejection in regard to the Catholic spiritual order. It denotes, on the contrary, a vast body of positive acquisitions and constructions in various spheres. It repre-

Catholicism
in the
Modern Mind.

sents an irresistible growth, a continuous evolution, from the earliest historic points to the present day. Consequently, it contains Catholicism itself, as well as those intellectual conquests which are sometimes looked upon as inevitably hostile to Catholicism. It contains Catholicism not merely as a sort of historic deposit, such as the culture of one age may be considered as necessarily leaving in the mind of a succeeding age; it contains it as a persisting constituent of its own conscious and developing life. If one outstanding feature of modern history—the history of the last six centuries of Western Europe—is the immense intellectual and practical development which it has witnessed, another is the large continuance of the Catholic spiritual order—the order of the Divine Christ—in the midst of an extraordinary play of potent forces which are commonly regarded as antagonistic to it. It has continued, not only in spite of this vast positive development, but in spite of the negative revolution—of the direct disruptive attacks upon it of Protestantism and atheism.

If we say, as we must say, that the rise and diffusion of Protestantism are of great importance in the estimate of modern history, and that they point to a serious inadequacy or failure in the Catholic Church, then we must also allow their due weight to those other commanding facts which bear witness to its representative greatness, as an expression of the high religious mind of Humanity. These facts are, from this point of view, decisive. The European religious problem would have been a comparatively simple one if the "Reformation" had been only a reformation—if it had preserved the Catholic spiritual order in its completeness and unity, while purifying and developing it. That problem, again, would have been simple if "Protestantism" had represented a higher completeness and universality wholly displacing a lower, and substituting itself for it. We know that this was not the case. Protestantism, in proportion to its success and effectiveness, was mainly a privative revolution. But its success was in

every sense limited. It was limited geographically. It was the revolution, and this only within definite degrees, of certain peoples and certain places. It has never been able, even if we consider it as a whole, to command so large a body of assent as the Catholicism which it has rejected, even since Catholicism has lost wide spheres of its authority. The success of Protestantism, further, has been limited religiously. It has nowhere been a total repudiation of Catholicism. Protestantism, on its affirmative side, is, in fact, only Catholicism truncated. Moreover, Protestantism, as we are all aware, is not, even within its own limits, the expression of a settled unity and universality, but of ever-increasing disagreement and discord in every province of religion.

Such a result, it may be said, would not have brought discredit upon it if it had proposed disagreement to itself as an aim. This, of course, it has not done, and could not do. The exigencies of practical life have compelled it to seek community and co-operation, and it has sought them, very often, to the extent of adopting a policy of persecution in order to secure them. But it has failed to do this. Further, while it is true that Protestantism is truncated Catholicism, it is also true that the various Protestant Churches have retained their ascendancy over their adherents almost exactly in proportion as they have continued to represent the Catholic spiritual order in worship, doctrine, or organization. They have failed as practical spiritual forces, it is no exaggeration to say, in the degree in which they have been Protestant. While the chief dogmatic and organic Protestant bodies—such as the Anglican, the Lutheran, and the Presbyterian—have preserved for themselves large spheres of social authority, an individualistic or “liberal” Christianity, even although it may have attracted to itself, from time to time, a certain number of cultivated and serious minds, has only succeeded in throwing up inconsiderable sects, commonly engaged in a difficult struggle for self-preservation.

To this it ought to be added that not only have the Protestant communities which have preserved most of Catholicism maintained the greatest social ascendancy, but they have, as we have seen—certainly in Great Britain, where the direct action of the Catholic Church was reduced to its smallest point—shown a marked and steady tendency, during the last seventy or eighty years, to spontaneously return to the Catholic spiritual order in conception and worship. Protestantism, as such, is a waning force. Catholicism, as such, is still a living force, either in its full internal expression in the Roman Church, or as a modifying influence, acting, in greater or less degree, on the various Protestant bodies. It is now almost four hundred years since Luther nailed his theses on Indulgences on the church door at Wittenberg. Since then Europe has undergone what appears to have been a complete intellectual transformation, for on the side of positive philosophy and science it has seen a company of thinkers arise, from Copernicus to Darwin and Herbert Spencer, the greatest that the world has ever known; while on the negative side it has witnessed the work of Voltaire and Gibbon, Hume and Kant, Hegel and Comte, as well as the growth of a Biblical criticism which has reduced the Scriptures to a legend and Jesus Christ to an Oriental myth. Yet the Catholic spiritual order has not disappeared. No one can pronounce it to be dead. If we hold it, as some profess to do, to be dying, we must also hold that all other forms of religion will die along with it; and if we hold that religion is, as we believe it to be, still living, and destined to live, then we must likewise hold that that great spiritual order—an order founded on the Divine Christ—which has, on so great a scale and during so many centuries, maintained itself, and exercised an attractive and shaping ascendancy under such widespread conditions of intellectual disruption and development, is destined to be a controlling factor in the religious evolution of the future.

We are now in a position to determine somewhat more precisely the nature of that task which, as we have seen, it falls to the Catholic Church to discharge—the task of giving complete religious unity to the world in Christ. It can, as we have said, only hope to accomplish this great task through the possession of the full force of the modern mind, by which we mean the complete and developed mind of the West, as it carries with it and represents, directly or indirectly, the total power and culture of Humanity, whether Western or Eastern. When we use the expression “modern mind” in this large positive sense, we see that Catholicism itself, as it exists either within or without the Roman Church, counts for a large part of its vitality and resource. We are not entitled so to use this expression as to imply that Catholicism, Roman or non-Roman, has ceased to possess importance, or that it may be left out of that synthesis of experiences and acquisitions which we call the mind of Humanity. It is, on the contrary, because Catholicism is still a living and potent factor of the modern mind that it has both the capacity and the obligation to bring into harmonious relation with itself its other factors, and so to accomplish the religious unity of mankind. This, as we have said, applies especially, and in the first instance, to what alone many understand by the “modern mind”—that is, to the distinctive, positive acquisitions, moral, intellectual, and practical, of the last six centuries. They represent a vast, irreversible enlargement of man’s mind and force, and have carried him into a plane of consciousness and vision from which it is impossible for us to conceive him as descending. While, therefore, we are bound to consider Catholicism itself, so long as it is visibly a living force, as a part of the “modern mind,” and as deriving title and strength from that fact, it is convenient now, for our immediate purpose, to employ this expression in its more usual and restricted sense, as denoting especially these distinctive positive acquisitions, together with the

Relation of
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larger consciousness and outlook which they have helped to create.

It is these great positive acquisitions and developments—the “modern mind” in the common acceptance of the word—that are ordinarily supposed to be

Causes of the
Revolution.

irreconcilable with Catholicism, and, by the expansion of the human spirit which they have brought about, to have plunged the world into that state of enlarging religious revolution, or atheism, with which we are at present concerned. What Catholicism has to do, therefore—and by Catholicism, of course, we here especially mean the Roman Church, its complete organic and persisting expression—is to reconcile itself with the modern mind in so far as that mind stands for actual positive and enduring acquisitions, moral, intellectual, and practical, and an irreversible expansion of the human spirit. It must, obviously, either so reconcile itself or fail in its mission of universality. It is, as are all human institutions, dependent ultimately for its practical power upon the acceptance and sanction of Humanity. Its own supremacy, as a social force—that very supremacy on which we have all along been insisting as its title to control the religious life of the future—rests on the indisputable fact that it does actually possess this warrant of Humanity in a fuller and higher sense than any other religious community. In so far, therefore, as the modern mind is really the mind of Humanity, a mind of synthetic positive acquisition and development, Catholicism must satisfy its demands upon the Church, and bring this modern mind itself within the circle of its own universality. We have been considering the growth and characteristics of the religious revolution, regarded as the complete rejection of the Catholic spiritual order, founded on Christ. The experience of mankind, however, does not afford us an example of any really great revolution, in either the spiritual domain or the temporal, which has taken place without adequate cause or justification, evil and disastrous as its development, in certain respects, may

have eventually proved. No competent Catholic historian, for instance, now denies that the state of the Church before the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation, or revolution, was one of widespread failure and abuse. If, as is the case, there is a deeper and more serious revolution at present in progress, then this revolution also has its causes, and causes of which a Church striving to bring in the universality of Christ is under a peculiar obligation to take account.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEMANDS UPON CATHOLICISM

It is not, within the limits of this work, possible to consider, in a complete analysis, all the great causes which have contributed to bring about the present religious situation in Western Christendom—a situation in which we see, on the one hand, the Catholic Church, representing in its integrity the medieval spiritual order, and, on the other, an ever-enlarging area of negative revolution, first Protestant, and ultimately atheistic. Upon some of these causes, nevertheless, it is important to touch, in order that, as far as possible, we may indicate in what way the Catholic Church may bridge over the gulf which separates it—not from atheism, for this it is certainly not called upon to do—but from those high and sure affirmations of modern reason which are invested with impregnable authority, precisely because they represent, what Catholicism itself represents in another sphere, the mature and developed mind of Humanity. Before entering upon these questions, however—before considering those modern demands upon the Catholic Church which it must either satisfy or fail in the purpose for which it exists—it is necessary to say a prefatory word. First, we must recognize that some of the demands which are occasionally pressed upon it are such that, if we could conceive it as accepting them, it would part with its distinctive greatness, and, indeed, sacrifice the very position and attributes which, as we have seen, give it its title to

direct the religious development of mankind. In yielding to such demands it would really be false to its historic mission, and abandon the spiritual cause of Humanity—that high ideal of religious unity and universality in Christ which is ever working prophetically in the best minds of the world. To all such demands it properly turns a deaf ear.

In the second place, if we have to say, as we must say, some things which may appear to be a criticism of the Catholic Church, on the side either of doctrine or of policy, we wish it to be understood that there is hardly a word of that criticism which will not apply—sometimes in an equal degree, and sometimes in a much greater degree—to other religious bodies, and even, in certain respects, to a number of social organizations which make no claim to be religious. The Catholic Church has been waiting for several centuries for bare scientific justice. It is now, we hope and believe, about to receive it. It is not true—as seems to be implied in many of the arguments of Protestants and freethinkers—that inside the Catholic Church all is obscurantism and oppression, while outside it all is light and freedom. There are possibly some Catholics themselves, chafing under what they feel to be a repressive discipline, who share this opinion. If they do, they are under an illusion; and if they left the Catholic Church, and entered into any other organized body, whatever its character, existing to give effect to definite aims, they would soon become aware of the illusion. It is commonly charged upon the Catholic Church that it has wielded the weapons of persecution and excommunication in the pursuit of its aims. Undoubtedly it has, but so, in one way or another, has every other body—from the Church of England down to the Society of Friends, in the religious sphere, and from an English political party down to a trade union, or a company of freethinkers, in the secular sphere. Auguste Comte, who insisted so strongly on the

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sound and benign principle of the separation of spiritual from temporal power, yet, in his scheme of a "Church of Humanity," provided deliberately and amply for the practice of excommunication, and called upon his adherents to accept his own teaching without criticism or amendment. The followers of the late Mrs. Eddy have, as is well known, subjected themselves to a rule and authority such as the Catholic Church in its proudest moments has never been able to exercise.

That Church, again, has been accused of sanctioning equivocation and casuistry. We are not about to examine how far this charge is true, but assuming it, for the moment, to be well founded, anyone who has studied the workings of English public life during the last forty years must know that it is not less true of our House of Commons, the members of which, nevertheless, have often permitted themselves a righteous denunciation of Catholic intrigues and methods. We do not mean by this, of course, that persecution and equivocation, as such, are defensible. We are, as we hope presently to show, believers in freedom and openness. But in entering, in certain respects, upon what may seem to be a criticism of the Catholic Church or its policy, we wish to be understood as holding that there is no charge which we are accustomed to bring against its administration which is not also true, in degree, of all other organized societies; and, further, as recognizing that the difficulties which the "modern mind"—the mind especially of objective and analytic science—finds in its doctrinal system it finds also in the doctrines of all the Protestant bodies, down to the least coherent and organic. We do not escape from those difficulties in leaving the Catholic Church to enter, let us say, a "theistic" or Unitarian community; we only pass from a greater Church to a smaller one—from a society which visibly rests, in a high degree, upon the experience and mind of a spiritual Humanity to one which, real as may be its merits, has yet no other authority and prospects than those

of a fractional sect. If the Catholic Church needs reformation—an increase of charity, of doctrinal spaciousness, of practical wisdom, of social competence and authority—so do all other Christian bodies; and what we say, therefore, in reference to it we say, by implication and in varying degree, of them also.

CHAPTER VIII

CATHOLICISM AND PROGRESS

WHEN we say that the Catholic Church must possess itself of the powers of the modern mind, and satisfy the legitimate demands of that mind upon it, it becomes necessary, of course, to determine how far those demands, given the distinctive purposes which the Church exists to accomplish, are really, in any particular instance, thus legitimate. One of the common criticisms directed against it, for example, is that it is not "progressive"—that it even refuses to acknowledge what may be called the principle of progress. There is undoubtedly a certain foundation for this charge. It is the characteristic boast of the Catholic Church that it is "always the same." We may sometimes hear a Catholic preacher "thank God that the Catholic Church is not progressive." Such a declaration, of course, must seem to be a direct challenge to the modern mind, which is so constantly occupied with ideals and movements of what we call progress. Here, as so often elsewhere, however, controversy and misunderstanding are largely due to an initial difference in the use of terms. Although modern teachers and writers so freely and habitually use the word "progress," it cannot be said that they use it with anything that deserves to be called scientific precision. We do not, in the ordinary occasions of life, either religious, political, or social, aim at a punctilious measure and exactness in the terms we employ. It is not necessary that we should. We are, as a rule, sufficiently intelligible to one another by means of a loose and

elastic use of them. In a precise definition of terms, moreover, their large practical and social value—their living value, as we may perhaps call it—is often sacrificed. Ordinary men and women understand, sufficiently well for their immediate purposes, what it is that they mean when they speak of “progress,” or of belonging to a “progressive party.”

When, however, we are concerned with so great a question as arises from the apparent denial of progress by the Catholic Church, and its affirmation by the modern mind, it is necessary to find for the word a large and clear meaning. It is only thus that we can determine how far the Church, when it appears to deny the principle of progress, is really denying what the modern scientific reason affirms in regard to it. “Progress,” of course, is a general and relative term. It only acquires force and lucidity when it receives a concrete and definite application. It is, in many respects, equivalent to what in science, and especially in biological science, is understood by “development.” By development—as, for example, in the case of a plant or an animal—we mean the regular unfolding or manifestation of an order or type given in experience. In much the same way, in the sphere of inorganic phenomena, we speak of the progress of the seasons—meaning their due succession in a customary relation. Here we can see that the idea of progress is dependent on the idea of fixity—that if, for example, in regard to a tree, or an animal, or the human organism, we had no settled ideas of form or type, the word “progress,” as applied to any of its changes, would be meaningless. When we say of such an organism that it is progressing or developing, we mean that its visible alterations in structure or character are the harmonious unfolding of a type given in experience. We know, also, that the idea of progress is, in this further sense, connected with fixity—that the normal development, and even the life, of a plant or animal are dependent on certain definite and constant relations with

Progress and
Fixity.

its environment. We do not use the words "progress" and "development" in the sense of mere change or variation; we use them in a sense dependent on a criterion, implied or expressed; and if we have no such criterion, we cannot, in either the biological, the social, or the moral order, speak of given changes as being progressive or retrogressive. In other words, the idea of progress is so far from being irreconcilable with the idea of fixity that without fixity there could be no progress.

This truth Auguste Comte formulates, for sociological purposes, in the general principle that "progress is the development of order," and—fastening, with Religious Progress. characteristic profundity, on what is central in social life—he further simplifies the principle by declaring that "human progress consists essentially in this, that man becomes more and more religious." We are all accustomed to the idea of progress in art, or science, or politics, or industry, or social manners; and it is easy to show that in each of these great categories we use the word substantially as Comte employs it—with the common-sense meaning, that is, of a gradual unfolding, increment and perfection of results and powers; and, negatively, of the loss or disappearance of what was antagonistic to such an advance. According to Comte's conception, however, all these special modes of progress are dependent ultimately on religious progress. Progress, which by his general principle is the development of order, is fundamentally the development of religious order.

Religion, however, once more, does not exist merely as an abstraction or as a definition; it exists in one or other of a number of living forms; it exists, in Western Europe, as the Catholic spiritual order, as it is contained either fully in the Catholic Church, or in the various modifications of it which we call Protestantism. Progress, therefore, relatively to the Catholic Church, must mean a development of the order which it represents—a development obviously dependent, so far as its essentials are concerned, upon its preservation. Progress

in reference to the Church, in other words, as in reference to any vegetable or animal organism, instead of being incompatible with fixity, demands it and rests upon it. Here, as in so many other respects, Catholicism is so far from being, in its basic principles, antagonistic to modern science that it is in spontaneous and large conformity with it. The whole business of science may be said to be to discover measurable uniformities of natural forces and relations, either for purposes of action, where action is possible, or for purposes of intelligent apprehension and submission, where action is impossible. If we conceive of science—and the modern mind does certainly so conceive of it—as being capable of carrying its objects and methods, in degree, into the region of man's social life, then there also, in proportion to its success, it will ascertain "laws," or unalterable uniformities of nature and working, to which man must conform himself, if he wishes his modifying and developing activity to prove efficient. It is obvious, too, that in social science, as in what, by distinction, we call "natural" science, the basis of inference is real experience, and that, for sociological purposes, this basis is furnished by the human past, in its various phases, of which Catholicism, in the region of religion, is the fullest and highest Western expression.

When, therefore, the Catholic Church, the depository and custodian of so large a body of high social experience, professes to be *semper eadem*, its claim is not necessarily antagonistic to the principle of progress; it may, on the contrary, on a closer view, and as regards fundamentals, be in strict conformity with it. The Church, when it is called upon to accept the principle of progress, is entitled to ask that that principle should be clearly defined, and defined in reference to the basic purposes which Catholicism exists to accomplish, and by those who are in agreement with those purposes. An atheist may have a conception of progress according to which man, in the domain of morals, increases in "stature and

Standards of
Religious
Progress.

wisdom," in proportion as he dispenses with prayer and worship, and becomes an erect being of pure science. That, as we have seen, is a conceivable criterion of progress, but we cannot accuse the Catholic Church of disallowing the principle of progress if it refuses to accept such a criterion. Again, the various Protestant communities, occupying, in certain respects, common ground with Catholicism—from Anglicanism to Unitarianism—might, in the name of progress, demand that the Catholic Church should advance to their own position and policy. If they did, the Church could certainly not be charged with denying progress if it called upon them to show in what way any of their conflicting types of Christian realization was, in doctrine, worship, and discipline, higher and fuller than its own, or if, before abandoning its own, it asked to be shown one resting upon a larger body of high human experience and assent.

If, further, it found—what it does find—many of these Protestant bodies, in certain respects, rather moving towards the Catholic type than resting in their own, it would have a still stronger warrant for believing that the line of religious progress did not necessarily lie in the direction of Protestantism. Once more, if there are those who say, with Auguste Comte, that "man's progress consists in his becoming more and more religious," and who then proceed, as he proposed, to take down the Crucifix from the altar, and put in its place the image of a modern Frenchwoman, holding a child in her arms, the Church, before following them, is entitled to ask in what way this constitutes religious progress, or what high spiritual principle this new symbol denotes which the old, according to the teaching and nobler life of Catholicism, has not represented. When the modern mind, in short, proposes an ideal of progress to the Catholic Church, and condemns it for rejecting such an ideal, the modern mind is under an obligation either to relate that ideal to the basic aims of Catholicism, which are the basic aims of all Christian

bodies, or to put forward a criterion of religious progress demonstrably wider and higher than any which is contained in Catholicism. Progress must either involve the disappearance of Catholicism, and therefore of Christianity, or its essential preservation and development.

A criterion of progress, stated in terms of Catholicism, and conditioned by its fundamental aims, is one which the

Progress and
Anarchy.

Catholic Church cannot repudiate. If it did, it would be false to itself. Now, the fundamental aim of Catholicism—an aim which, as we have seen, creates for it an eternal obligation from which it cannot escape—is the bringing into the life of man of the unity and universality of Christ. Catholicism exists to do this. It is Catholic in proportion as it does it. In other words, it is progressive in proportion as it does it. Here we have a criterion of progress, in relation to Catholicism, which it is unable to disavow, and which gives it a measure of itself and of its own action. Further, we have here a criterion of progress which is, what any true criterion of progress ought to be, reconcilable with order or fixity. The great characteristic aim of Catholicism is to-day what it was nineteen centuries ago—the bringing of Christ universally into the life of man. In reference to this aim the Church is “always the same,” and it is in reference to this aim that the Church is, or is not, progressive. The Church, in so far as it is progressive, is progressive by the ever larger affirmation of this aim; it is progressive by the ever deeper and fuller realization of it. It may seem, and it does seem, to some modern minds, that it is not probable that a principle of religious fixity—a law for the widening intelligence and life of man—should have been thrown up nearly two thousand years ago, and under conditions of imperfect culture and intellectual development. Some hold, indeed, that no such principle has even yet been discovered—that the life of man is not a possession of it, but a search for it, and that not until some remote, indefinite point has been reached in the human future will

it be possible and right to bring in for man an organized universality.

To this the Church has a sure answer : the blind cannot seek. If we have no light by which to look, we cannot look. Christ is our light in religion ; and just as in the arts, or in philosophy, or in science, or in civil policy, or in industry, we go back for illumination and power to the great men and great achievements of the past, and often a distant past, so in religion—the ordering and elevation of man's spiritual being—we go back to Christ. We go back to Him, however, not to die, but to live ; we go back to Him not to disguise our failures, or our incompleteness, and to rest in them, but that He may enter more and more into the life of mankind, and there fulfil His Divinity. He is always the same, and the Church in affirming Him is always the same ; yet, being always the same, He is always different, and the Church, being always the same in its affirmation and realization of Him, is also always different, because it affirms Him ever with a wider intelligence, and realizes Him ever with a fuller completeness. That is progress—the constant development or unfolding of an order given in experience. If we could conceive the Catholic Church—or, rather, its governing authorities at any given time—as persisting in the denial and refusal of progress in this sense, then, of course, Christ would not die, and Catholicism would not die, since, like all things transcendent in light and beauty, they are naturally imperishable, but they would pass under another guardianship, and progress would be secured, as it has so often had to be secured in both the spiritual and temporal regions, at the cost of the disasters and waste of revolution. If it is true, in the words of Comte, that progress is the development of order—if it is true, in other words, that the higher future of man, in all its categories, must proceed, by way of inheritance and increase, out of his highest past—then it is not less true that in denying progress we compromise order, and force men, in greater or less degree, into anarchy.

We are not entitled to suppose that the Catholic Church will thus permanently disavow progress, in the sense of the enlarging ascendancy and universality of Christ, although it may well feel that it is entitled to disavow it in the sense of abandoning its own basic aims, or of accepting a lower and narrower realization of them, instead of one higher and fuller. We are not entitled to suppose this, for one thing, because the Catholic Church has actually been, in history, a progressive Church, and this throughout the whole domain of religion. It has been progressive in doctrine, in worship, in organization, in social action. It has shown a growing and expanding mind as regards either the conception of God, or the settlement and use of Scripture, or the shaping of the creeds, or the ideals and methods of worship, or the discipline of life, or the constitution and government of the hierarchy. If it had not been so progressive, there would have been no reason for the long line of its Councils—from the Council of Nice in the fourth century to the Vatican Council in the nineteenth—or for its constant accumulation of definitions and decrees. These are all signs of a body growing and developing, but with a growth and development naturally and rightly conditioned by that which gave to it its principle of vitality, namely Christ. The doctrine of Catholicism has been the doctrine of Christ; its worship has been the worship of Christ—since the worship of the Virgin and the Saints always ultimately carried men back to Christ; its system of life has been a system of life in Christ. When we say, therefore, that the Catholic Church is bound by the nature of its mission to be progressive, we mean that it is bound to be what, in degree, it has always been, and that it cannot at the same time be truly Catholic in its aims and ideals, and continue indifferent to the fact that the world on which it looks out has, for the most part, never yet been gained for Catholicism, and has, in a large part, been lost to Catholicism, and that even where it has become and remained Catholic, the

spiritual beauty of Christ has only inadequately penetrated and controlled it.

Further, the Catholic Church, scientifically regarded, is, as we have already said, in the region of religion, a voice of Humanity. It has, and it must recognize that it has, for practical purposes, no other place in the world than that which Humanity accords to it. By this principle, as we have also seen, it has a great place, and the assumption on which we have been proceeding throughout is that by this principle it may come, in the future, to have a place still greater. It cannot, however, secure this greater place for itself by any other process than that by which it has gained and maintained the place which it already holds. Within certain limits, it has visibly rooted itself in the mind of Humanity; within certain limits it has not only failed to do this, but just as visibly has become uprooted. It is under an obligation to consider why it has thus gained, and why it has lost. It won for itself its commanding place in the world by making an appeal, a noble and effectual appeal, to the spiritual heart and reason of Humanity. It is useless for the Church, in such a connection, to fall back upon the idea of miracle. If by miracle we mean some power or process which dispenses with the concurrence of the mind and will of man—something which subverts man, transforms him, and turns him to Christ without the co-operation of his own feeling and intelligence—then we are bound to admit that miracle has only worked for Catholicism within definite limits of space and time, and that it is just as capable as any form of avowedly human action of failing in its aims. The Catholic Church as, in this sense, a Church of miracle is not an historically intelligible thing.

If, on the other hand, we admit—what is so obviously true that no sane mind can be supposed to question it—that the Church has actually depended for its growth and advance on the co-operation of man's heart and mind, then we come back to this—that the Catholic Church has,

and must continue to have, exactly the place in the world which Humanity accords to it. The mind of Humanity, however, is in this plain sense progressive, that in every sphere of its operations—in art, in science, in politics—it presses forward, through the ages, from gain to gain, from power to power, never, of course, losing a real conquest, never, of course, abandoning a sure truth, but consciously standing higher in each succeeding age than it stood before ; and as it looks back with an eye of measurement and possession upon its past, looking forward also with the sense of a greater kingdom still to be won. It would be absurd to suppose that this movement and ripening of the human spirit in so many great fields are to have no effect upon what it has won for itself in the field of religion. The Catholic Church is entitled to deny the name of progress to anything which is not progress in Christ, but it is also bound to admit that progress in Christ is both possible and necessary—progress in men's conception of His Divinity, progress in the worship which they accord to Him, progress in the life by which they realize Him ; and, further, that progress in the sphere of religion is in natural and inevitable relation with the advancing mind and life of Humanity in the spheres of art, science, and politics. We must conclude, then, that the Church could only deny progress by denying itself a place in the future life of Humanity.

CHAPTER IX

CATHOLICISM AND LIBERTY

WHAT we have said on the question of progress has an evident bearing on the companion question of liberty. We are not now, of course, concerned with this Persecution. question as a question purely abstract or philosophic ; we are concerned with it only as it affects the Catholic Church in its relation to the modern world, and to that great task of progressive unification in Christ which we say is naturally assigned to it. Liberty for the purposes of that task—liberty conditioned by Christ and by progress in Christ—this the modern mind, the mind of a developed and mature Humanity, is entitled to ask from it ; liberty irreconcilable with Christ it cannot, within the sphere of its own authority and responsibility, reasonably be expected to sanction. It is sometimes implied, in arguments directed against the Catholic Church, that it has been, in some peculiar and exceptional sense, hostile to liberty—that it has been pre-eminently, in principle and effect, a persecuting Church. This, as has been already pointed out, is not true. All Churches, Christian and non-Christian, Catholic and non-Catholic, down even to the smallest of Protestant sects, have been persecuting in proportion to their power. Persecution is not so much a consequence of creed as of temperament. We ought not to forget—what by historians, religious and secular, is so constantly overlooked—that when Christ has come into the minds of men He has worked there with a character and effect conditioned by their personal dispositions, their individual culture, and

the culture of the age in which they have lived. That is one reason, amongst others, why the common hypothesis of miracle, in relation to the working of Christ in the world, is historically so useless. He has visibly worked, when He has worked, not by processes of psychologic abrogation and effacement, but as a force amongst other forces, some favourable and co-operating, some unfavourable and resistant.

We can understand the history of the Church on this principle; we cannot understand it on any other. The Middle Ages were not, as they used to be called, "Dark Ages." They were, in many respects, ages of transcendent goodness, wisdom, and beauty. But they were also ages when men, for the most part, were semi-barbaric, ignorant, with an ignorance which is now hardly conceivable, reckless of life, indifferent to physical hardship and suffering, and often readily and remorselessly cruel. Christ coming into the hearts of such men—and in a certain sense, and in degree, it is clear that He did come into them—did not transform them into angels of purity, reasonableness, and constraining mercy. It is not so that the life of the Divine has worked in the life of man. Christ, coming into the heart of an African negro, does not abrogate the distinction between the African and the European mind, any more than He abrogates the distinction between a black skin and a white one. The mass of men in the Middle Ages were, in a sense and in degree, Christian, but they were also often stupid, gross, fierce, and arbitrary, and no more disposed to be habitually patient and tolerant in their Christianity, such as it was, than an English Liberal or Conservative at the present day is disposed to be habitually patient and tolerant with his political opponents. Persecution was in the Church, in short, because human nature was in it, and because Christ, Who is illumination and love, does not work by the effacement or abolition of human nature, but works within it, and by a gradual penetration and transformation of it. The Catholic Church, it may be

said, has been, in principle, a persecuting Church, in the sense of holding it right to suppress what it considered heresy by the use of the secular power; but so, also, as it is hardly necessary to repeat, have been various Protestant Churches, which, all the same, have been loud in denouncing the persecutions of Rome. The question of spiritual liberty is a difficult one—difficult because of the temper which works in men, and which inclines them rather to condemn and suppress opposing opinions than to consider and discuss them; and difficult also because no organized society of men, working for certain specific ends, is called upon to sanction, within its own bounds, a liberty which it considers incompatible with its self-preservation, and therefore with the very objects which it exists to promote.

For a persecuting Church, in the old sense of these words—for a Church using the temporal power to punish dissent from its teaching, or to prevent freedom of speech and action in religion—there is no place in the modern world. So far, at least, we have moved in the way of progress. This does not mean that the temper of persecution no longer works in the human mind. From time to time it bursts into life again, in either the spiritual domain or the temporal, and certainly not alone in that Catholic Church which is, by many Protestants and Liberals, supposed to be its exclusive domain. But, very fortunately for itself and the world, the Catholic Church has not now the power to be, in the old sense, a persecuting Church. It has become, more than it has ever been since the age of Constantine, a spiritual society. It is thrown upon its true strength. It works for Christ—that is to say, it works for the religious peace and progress of Humanity—by the power of Christ Himself, as He attracts and inspires men, and not by the power of the Inquisition and the despot. As it works thus it wins, and is destined to win, upon the human spirit, proposing to itself the things of consolation and hope.

Liberty in
Christ.

We are, therefore, not now concerned to ask whether the Catholic Church ought to use a power of temporal suppression and oppression which it has ceased to possess, but how far it ought to use those means of spiritual discipline and authority which are inherent in its constitution. We may ask it for liberty—we may propose to it liberty as the only atmosphere in which great things for the spirit are ever accomplished, but we cannot reasonably ask it for a liberty contrary to its basic aims. What, however, are those basic aims? We may sum them up in a single word—Christ. Christ is the foundation of the Catholic Order; Christ is its end. Christ is the Sun of the Catholic world. It is to diffuse His light amongst men that the Church exists. It is to bring the whole of Humanity—Humanity which is contained in Him, Humanity which also, in degree, contains Him—into willing subjection to His Divinity, that the Catholic system of Doctrine, the Catholic system of Worship, and the Catholic system of Life have been wrought in the ages into a many-sided and living whole, the partial but progressive expression of spiritual man in his ever-widening relation with the ever-emerging greatness of God. That whole is living now, and as it lives it grows. It is the part of the Church, as an administrative authority, not to hinder this growth, but, on the contrary, to encourage and guide it. For such a growth—for a continual expansion of Catholicism in its triple domain of Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline—liberty is a prime essential, but liberty conditioned by Christ, Who is a truth of spiritual perfection and freedom, delivered to the soul of man, to raise it ever more fully out of evil and bondage. The Church must beware lest, in trying to arrest this free religious development of Humanity, it sets arbitrary bounds to the revelation of God. It need not fear for the future. The future has the guarantee of the past. Christ, having once been given, was given for ever, like all the precious things of truth and beauty which have won for themselves a place in the human soul.

Here, then, we have two conditions which, as we may say, are proposed to the Catholic Church by the modern mind, and which the Church is bound to satisfy, if it is to keep its place in that mind, and fulfil its mission of universality in Christ.

A Policy of
Development.

It must learn to understand and accept the principle of progress ; it must learn to understand and accept the principle of liberty. In saying this, let us repeat, we are only saying, in effect, that the Church must be true to its own best self. In degree it has actually been, and inevitably been, a Church of progress, advancing, through the ages, from point to point of apprehension and power, in its realization of Christ ; in degree, and in its high heroic moments, it has recognized and affirmed the truth that liberty is a good of the spirit, essential to its life and noblest working. What is necessary for it—necessary for it as a supreme organ of religious unification and development—is that it should gain a full and systematic command of these two principles of progress and liberty, and give to them their right place in its action. The Catholic Church must cease to stand, as it does undoubtedly stand in the minds of many serious and instructed men and women, as pre-eminently the Church of stagnation and oppression ; it must, on the contrary, stand—and this while remaining, and because it remains, true to its basic and eternal aims—as pre-eminently the Church of life and freedom.

We use the word “must” in this connection because it is the right word to use. The Catholic Church, in relation to these two great conceptions of progress and liberty, has only one choice before it : it must live or die. If it elects to live, it must, in the sense which we have now given to this word, elect to be progressive ; if it refuses to be progressive, it refuses to live. As it is hardly necessary to say, when we so speak of the Church as living or dying we mean especially its responsible and ruling hierarchy. Christ will not die. Catholicism will not die. The Church as a whole—whatever some of its modern critics and

opponents may think—will not die. That mighty spiritual organism contains within itself too large a part of the noblest life of Humanity to be capable of death. But the ruling hierarchy of the Church may suffer again what it has suffered already—a loss of jurisdiction and power; and, what is worse, suffer it not because of its fidelity to Christ, or because of its refusal to make an unworthy surrender to what is unspiritual in man, but because it blindly and obstinately insists that the mind of a given age, whatever its state of culture or religious development, shall be an eternal measure of the things of Christ. The Church which so understands itself misunderstands itself; the Catholicism which so limits its own vitality and capacity—facing the enlarging life of Humanity with a *semper eadem* which is equivalent to a *non possumus*—cannot, of course, arrest progress, but it can provoke a revolution. Revolution and progress are, as we have tried throughout to show, not the same thing. They are really antithetic. Revolution is overthrow. It is rejection. It is loss. While, however, revolution is, in itself, not progress, a given revolution may be an indispensable condition of progress; and while it is certain that neither Christ, nor Catholicism, nor the Catholic Church, as a spiritual organism, can pass permanently out of the life of Humanity, it is equally certain that the Government of the Catholic Church may do again what it has done before—throw men for an indefinite time out of order into anarchy, out of a harmonious and growing life in Christ into the waste and unrest of atheism.

Even so, we repeat, Catholicism will not die. It will eventually recover itself, and live with a greater life, finding other guardians, another expression, another realization. This mind which we call the modern mind—as distinguished from the mind of a revolutionary atheism or sectarian Protestantism—does not really wish Catholicism to die. This modern mind is itself broadly and increasingly Catholic, or synthetic. It is the mind of Humanity developed and become conscious of itself,

The True
Modernism.

and entering into possession of its full domain. That is the modern mind; and if we are to use the somewhat objectionable word "modernism" to denote its spirit and processes, then we must understand by modernism not a mere criticism of the Scriptures, or of the dogmas, or of the ruling authorities of the Catholic Church, but the spirit of the Western man reaching a totality of culture and life, in which none of the great things of Humanity—ancient, medieval, modern, Western or Eastern—will be suffered to die. Modernism, therefore, so understood, and in its ideal completeness, is not simply denial or rejection; it is affirmation and possession. Such a modernism is Catholicism fulfilling itself—a Catholicism in comparison with which a merely official Catholicism may be a narrow sectarian refusal of Humanity where Humanity is most exalted into an expression of the Divine.

To the student of history no single fact is more impressive than the way in which the mind of man—that one man of all the ages, according to Pascal's formula, always living and always learning—visibly refuses, in its onward movement, to leave behind it the great things of goodness, beauty, truth, and power which have raised it in the scale of being. They are, in Wordsworth's words, of the things "which having been, must ever be"; and this not as making a sort of atomic contribution to life and consciousness, but as points of perpetual light in the human firmament. The great men and the great things of the past may, in the vast, unequal, many-sided progression of man—with its moments of exaggeration, its moments of indifference or neglect, its moments even of apparent denial—have appeared, for a time, to have lost their place. The rise of Christianity seemed at first a loss or repudiation of the culture of antiquity. The rise of the modern world has sometimes presented itself as a loss or repudiation of the medieval. Eventually, however, a time of sure and high reparation sets in. The culture of the ancient world—its art, its philosophy, its science, its citizenship—is now a wider possession for man than it has ever been before; and

during the last hundred years—a period in European history pre-eminent in science, in industry, in political development, and even, apparently, in negative criticism—there has been a large and steady recovery of the spiritual beauty and truth of Catholicism.

It is the note of the great man and the great thing that they not only persist but grow—living a fuller life and working a greater work in some distant age than in the age which gave birth to them. There was a time in the later Middle Ages when an almost superstitious importance was attached to Aristotle; there came a time when he seemed in danger of falling into contempt or neglect. Now he is neither unduly exalted nor unduly disparaged, but holds a high and sure place amongst the masters of human culture. There was a time in our own history when Dante as a poet, St. Francis of Assisi as a spiritual type, and St. Thomas Aquinas as a philosopher, were almost unknown to the vast majority of even educated Englishmen, who, however, knew a good deal of the Greek and Latin classics. Now Dante, St. Francis, and St. Thomas are a possession even for persons of moderate culture; and yet the greater Greek and Latin classics have probably more readers than they ever had before. Less than a hundred years ago the names of Buddha and Confucius would have suggested nothing to most instructed Western minds, and it was still safe to dismiss Mohammed as a mere impostor. Now no ordinarily competent mind can remain in such ignorance of the religions of the East, or can afford to dismiss them with sectarian contempt. The great men and the great things, we repeat, eventually conquer their world and hold it; and the modern mind, the mind of a fully developed Humanity—"a being of large discourse, looking before and after"—has a natural power and sovereignty precisely because it has been nourished and expanded by the culture of all the ages, and exercises within itself a lordship over many kingdoms. The modern mind disallows things and allows them. It dismisses, but it also recovers and possesses.

It says, with St. Paul, because it is the mind of a continuous Humanity, ever living and learning : “ When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child : now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things.” But it says also, with our great English philosopher-poet :

“ The Child is father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.”

CHAPTER X

CATHOLICISM AND SCIENCE

To the jurisdiction of the modern mind—not, once more, the mind of Protestantism or atheism, but the positive mind of a developed and synthetic Humanity—
Reason in Catholicism. the Catholic Church, we say, must appeal, and this because the modern mind, thus considered, contains Catholicism itself, and contains it as it is lit up and completed by the totality of human culture. The modern mind, so understood, is sovereign. In any other view of it, it is, in relation to Catholicism, not sovereign. It is not sovereign when it disallows Catholicism, any more than it would be sovereign if it disallowed the arts and sciences ; but possessing Catholicism—in other words, holding the medieval spiritual order enriched by the positive conquests of a developed Humanity—it has a natural lordship in the Catholic Church as it stands. It has the lordship of that which is more developed over that which is less developed—of the complete over the incomplete. Therefore, the right demands which the modern mind makes upon the Catholic Church—the demands of a complete Catholicism, as we may call them—are demands which the Church, sooner or later, must certainly satisfy. One of these demands, as we have seen, is that it should recognize the principle of progress ; another is that it should recognize the principle of liberty. A third demand which the modern mind presses upon the Catholic Church—a demand fundamental and governing—is that it should recognize what we may perhaps call the principle of

demonstration, or rationality, in its application to the whole contents of Catholicism, in doctrine, worship, or conduct.

The Church, in other words, must be prepared to show, in proportion as the need arises for it, that what it proposes for men's acceptance rests, in the last resort, upon a positive basis of reality and utility—using both these words, of course, not in a narrow and low sense, but in the widest and highest signification of which they are capable. Here, again, the demand of the modern mind upon Catholicism is a right demand. We are not, as we have already pointed out, entitled to assume—what both Catholics and anti-Catholics sometimes do assume—that what is often called rationalism is necessarily antagonistic to Catholicism. Rationalism, properly so called, does not stand for a set of conclusions; it stands for a method of reaching conclusions. It denotes a systematic use of reason. Catholicism is so far from being, in itself, hostile to such a use of reason that, as we have seen, the Vatican Council expressly affirms that we can, “by the natural light of reason,” apart from revelation, attain a sure knowledge of God; and, as everyone knows, great thinkers of the Church, such as St. Anselm, St. Thomas, and Cardinal Newman, have, in the way of rational argument, dealt with this supreme theme. During recent years, moreover, the Catholic Church has, with very great advantage to itself, made a laudable attempt, in a large number of popular manuals and catechisms, to explain and vindicate its teachings, ritual, and discipline to the ordinary mind.

When, therefore, the modern mind proposes to the Church what we have called the principle of demonstration—that, in proportion as the need arises, it should be prepared to prove the positive reality and utility of Catholicism throughout its whole domain—it proposes nothing contrary to Catholicism, but, on the contrary, something which is in accord with its own teaching and practice. This demand upon it is, con-

Sovereignty
of the
Modern Mind.

sequently, a just demand. It is, however, a demand which the Church cannot satisfy merely by formulating a series of abstract propositions at an Œcumenical Council, or by a reiteration of its own infallibility, or by the violent assertions and denunciations of its preachers, claiming to be the mouthpiece of God. These things, to the sovereign modern mind, asking for demonstration, are not convincing. An Œcumenical Council itself—which, of course, is not a teaching body, but a declaratory authority—is, moreover, not now Œcumenical. It can no longer be said of it—what once might, perhaps, have been said with some show of reason—*securus judicat orbis terrarum*. Great and august assembly as it may be, there is a greater council outside it, and a council which understands by demonstration something more than an *ipse dixit*. A single scientific thinker, by a really demonstrable discovery or proof, is certain, sooner or later, to command the assent of mankind. He makes his appeal to Humanity, and Humanity responds to it. Catholicism in the modern world must make a similar appeal. It is dealing, in this relation, with a sovereign power. Its permanent position in the world—if we may once more fall back upon our former statement—cannot be determined by any mere claims which it may make for itself; it can only be determined by the degree in which these claims are actually allowed and ratified by Humanity. The verdict of Humanity, of the true *orbis terrarum*, will, as we believe, in all its high essentials, be in favour of Catholicism, and certainly it will not be in favour of Protestantism or atheism; but such a verdict can only be reached by the way of reason or demonstration, which, in the last resort, is the way of religious practice and use.

CHAPTER XI

THE PROVINCE OF FAITH

WHEN we say that the Catholic Church, in order to master the powers of the modern mind, must gain for itself the authority of demonstration, it may seem that we are going counter to that principle of faith on which the Church so strongly and so rightly insists. This, however, is not so. Faith itself admits of being brought, and must be brought, in so far as the necessity arises, within the sphere of demonstration. Reason and faith are not antagonistic. Reason is on the side of faith. By faith, in this connection, we mean believing something which we have not personally proved, or which we may not have the means or the capacity to prove. Faith, in this sense, is so far from being contrary to reason that, as is obvious, the business of human life could not, for a single day, be carried on without it. Without faith—in this plain sense of believing things which we ourselves have not proved—we could not consult a doctor, learn from a teacher, buy from a shopkeeper, take a railway journey, get married, or rent a house; and without such faith it is clear that the whole organization of government, justice, and civil policy would fall to the ground. This is, doubtless, a truism, but, like many other truisms, it is necessary to return to it for simplicity and sureness when great and complex questions are under discussion.

While, however, it is clear that faith—in this plain, general sense of believing things which we have not

personally proved—is so far from being contrary to reason that it is indispensable to the conduct of life, it is still

necessary to show when, and within what

Faith in
Practical Life. limits, the exercise of such faith is reasonable.

When, for the first time, we go to a doctor for health, and to a professor for science, we go, of course, in faith. We believe, without having ourselves personally proved it, that the doctor and professor are honest and capable. If we were asked for the grounds of this preliminary faith in them, we should probably say either that persons in whom we had confidence had recommended them, or that we trusted the public authorities from whom they derived their credentials. In either case we should be resting in an experience and reason not our own—the experience and reason of others, relatively to matters as to which we ourselves had no knowledge or competence. This is faith, and, as would generally be allowed, it is a reasonable faith. It is, in other words, an exercise of mind on our own part, by which, in certain specific relations, we enter into possession of the minds of others—immediately of the mind of a given doctor or professor, indirectly of the continuous, controlling mind of Humanity, expressed in the accumulated principles and methods of a particular art or science.

It is clear that what we here call an exercise of faith is really an exercise of reason and judgment, and that within these limits, therefore, there is no fundamental antagonism between faith and reason. It is clear also that, in these instances, we exercise our faith for a practical purpose—in the one case to obtain health, in the other to gain proficiency in a certain science. Further, it is evident that this exercise of faith, which is really an appeal to reason and experience, is followed by a further use of reason and experience, so soon as we actually put ourselves under medical treatment, or enter upon the study of the science. In proportion, too, as we do this, we subject the soundness of our faith to a practical test. We may not be

versed in the art of medicine, or in the principles of a particular science, but everyone knows when he is getting well, or is advancing in a certain study, and it is easy also to judge whether a particular doctor or teacher applies himself to his duties with care and thoroughness. If, when all allowances have been made for the inherent difficulties of our disease, or for our personal incapacity, we find, in the one case, that we are getting no better, and, in the other, that we are making no progress, we may reasonably conclude that it is desirable for us to turn to another doctor or teacher. If we do this, however, we can still only repeat the process which we have already gone through—choose a doctor or teacher by an exercise of faith, and afterwards subject the soundness of our faith to the test of experience.

We see, then, that, so far as we have gone at present, faith has certain definite characters. It is, for one thing, so far

The Failures
of Faith.

from being irreconcilable with reason that it is itself an exercise of reason. By such an exercise of reason we may, of course, be led, in a particular case, to a mistaken conclusion. We may give our faith to the wrong person, or to the wrong book, or to the wrong authority, of whatever kind. To say this, however, is not to say that faith is irrational, but that here, as elsewhere, the human mind is capable of error. We are not, of course, exempt from this possibility of error even if we decide, in common phraseology, not to exercise faith at all, or to appeal to any external authority, but to “think for ourselves,” or trust to the unassisted power of our own minds. Such a trust may be exceedingly ill-founded. It may be that in so trusting—as many persons, in reference to certain questions, and in greater or less degree, undoubtedly do—we are simply resting in inexperience, ignorance, incapacity, and self-assertion, instead of gaining the correction and illumination of minds more competent than our own. There could certainly be no error greater than this. The mistakes of faith, therefore, are not an argument against the use of faith, any more than the

mistakes of reason are an argument against the use of reason. They only show that an exercise of faith is, as we have said, itself an exercise of reason, and that to exercise faith wisely and fruitfully—that is, to form a sound judgment as to those whom we ought to trust in any of the categories of thought and life—demands a high and wise exercise of reason.

In the second place, when we exercise faith—and such an exercise, as we have seen, is forced upon us, in degree, by the universal needs of life—we exercise it with reference to some end which we wish to accomplish, either of theory or practice. This is important, because, so exercising our faith, we subject it naturally to the tests of experience. If we find that we are not securing the objects which we have proposed to ourselves, we conclude that our faith has been wrongly given, and that it is necessary for us to exercise it again. In the third place, this use of reason which we call an exercise of faith is only preliminary to a still further use of it. When we put ourselves under a teacher in art or science we undergo an expansion of mind. We begin to grow in knowledge and rational power. Faith, consequently, is a first step in the life of reason, which inevitably carries us to other and greater steps. Further, faith is a power of possession. It is an exercise of our own minds which gives us access to the minds of others, and makes their resources ours. Ultimately, as we have seen, faith gives us access to the universal mind of Humanity, and to its vast accumulation of forces and results in religion, in art, in science, in politics, in industry, and in social manners.

It is important, in this connection, to recognize, first, that without such an exercise of faith—that is, without an initial presumption in our own minds that what Humanity has to offer us in the field of culture is of value—we could not thus become possessed of the treasures of Humanity; secondly, that our power of possessing and using these treasures is not to be measured by our power of analytic

apprehension in regard to them. We may feel, and commonly do feel, the beauty and charm of a musical composition, or of a great poem or picture, without understanding the scientific or technical foundations on which they rest. We enter into the field of art by faith, and when we have entered it its forces and forms of beauty produce upon us an effect of enchantment and consolation quite out of proportion to any analytic apprehension of them that we may possess. While, therefore, we say that the Catholic Church, mastering the powers of the modern mind, must arm itself, in so far as the need arises, with the authority of demonstration, and must, among other things, show that faith itself is reasonable, we do not mean that human life can be directly based on demonstration. Life is based upon faith—upon our power of believing things which we have not personally proved, but which yet, in proportion as we then enter into possession and use of them, gain the interpretation and ratification of a new experience.

So far, we have considered faith mainly on its intellectual side, as a process of rationality, preliminary to possession and use. When, however, we speak of the
The Disposition of Faith.
 “gift of faith,” or of the grace of faith, we mean by faith not so much our belief in certain things as our disposition to so believe. Our thinking is, of course, not independent of our feelings, but, on the contrary, is largely conditioned by them. No man readily believes a charge against his wife, or daughter, or friend, whom he loves; and he does not habitually keep himself in a state of mental suspense or judicial impartiality in regard to them. It is not reasonable that he should, since his affection for them has been rendered sure and strong by the experience which he has had of them. If, therefore, it is true that we exercise faith with reference to some practical end which we propose to ourselves, it is clear that our feeling with regard to that end must have a determining effect on the character and intensity of our faith. When we are suffering from illness, we have a

powerful inducement to give our faith to a doctor—an inducement so strong that, as we all know, it frequently moves men to accord a sort of desperate confidence to charlatans and unqualified persons. In the same way, if our inclinations carry us to the study of an art or science, we are naturally led to such a faith in its teachers as may give us a command of it. In these regions, and in reference to these high interests, we believe readily and freely because we have the motives of belief.

And, of course, what is true of art or science is true of religion. Faith in religion is, as Catholicism teaches, not merely the expression of a reasoned judgment and choice, but proceeds from the working of an inner spiritual affection or desire, urging us onward towards a definite object. Belief and love are not separate powers. We believe where we love, we love where we believe. If we love the things of religion—if we have in our minds the vision of a unified human soul, living in the beauty of Christ, and ordering itself, in temper, thought, and action, so as to be itself in correspondence with His Divinity, and give it forth again as a transformed manhood or womanhood—if this is the central and haunting image of our minds, then we shall believe easily and strongly anything that seems to unite us more closely with Christ, and unwillingly believe anything that threatens to separate us from Him. If we so love Christ, we cannot keep our minds in a state of judicial balance or dispassionate impartiality in regard to Him. It is not reasonable that we should do this, any more than it is reasonable that we should do it in the case of the wife or the friend whom we cherish. It is reasonable for us to cling to Christ, and to reject anything that threatens to alienate us from Him, if we feel that He has been to us a Presence of Perfection, breathing forth consolation and peace, and if of such moments of high vision, of holy impulse, of sweet and ordered life, as have come to us He has seemed to us the supreme source. In thus clinging to Him, in thus resisting all that would divide us from Him,

we are reasonable, because we are resting in an actual experience, as to the reality of which we cannot be mistaken. The faith which led us to Him, and which has kept us in contact with Him, has been tested and ratified. The things for which we went to Him, He has given to us, and the greater our faith in Him has been, the greater have been His gifts to us.

The common saying, therefore, is a sound one—that we believe where we wish to believe, although, of course, it

The
Disposition
of Unbelief. does not follow from this that all that we wish to believe we have the power to believe. And, of course, it is equally true that our unbelief, or want of faith, is largely determined by the nature of our dominant desires and interests. Catholicism, as we know—a right, spiritual, pure Catholicism—does and must present itself as a self-imposed discipline, and as a surrender of many things which to most men, on certain sides of their nature, are powerfully attractive. If this is so, it is clear that there are motives of unbelief which operate as strongly in one direction as the motives of faith which operate in another. Men and women, for the most part, do not easily and freely choose the law of religion; they choose it, when they choose it, by the constraint of their higher nature, or the working of grace operating upon their lower nature. If, for example, we say, as it is so customary for Englishmen to say, that we do not believe in the principle of confession, we are bound to recognize that our “disbelief” in it is largely an expression of a personal dislike to it. We may, of course, be sincerely convinced by what we have heard or read that confession has in practice been productive of serious evils, and may possibly give rise to them again. Such a conviction itself, however, is certainly strengthened by our native reluctance to open our inner mind to another mind, and disclose offences of which we are ourselves ashamed. Further, when this reluctance at last gives way—under the pressure, perhaps, of a still stronger reluctance to remain

perpetually anxious and troubled in conscience—our reasoning about confession is changed, and we are moved to accept in faith a means of relief and solace of which it is clear that only faith can give us possession.

We cannot, therefore, say that the Church is wrong when it teaches that faith or unbelief—believing or refusing to believe things which we have not ourselves personally proved—depends, in a great degree, upon disposition. Where the Church is wrong—and this is where the modern mind is against it—is in supposing, as it certainly often appears to do, that the spiritual disposition which inclines us to faith—the sense of the beauty and peace of the religious life, the sense of Christ as its central expression—can be created or sustained by threats and denunciations. Men may easily be driven out of a Church, and lost to Christ, by threats and censures, which, to the modern mind, are both odious and absurd; but they cannot, by such methods, be kept within it in a state of spiritual and fruitful allegiance, and they cannot, by such methods, be brought into it again when once they have left it. The Catholic Church, as we have seen, has, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, shown a remarkable power of attracting into its communion minds which have been alien to it, but what has attracted them has not been the narrow arrogance of ecclesiastical censures and commination; it has been the spiritual beauty of Jesus Christ, expressing itself in such an order of worship and life as is not to be found elsewhere. The Church must recognize this truth. It must understand its own power. It must alter its policy. It must practise persuasiveness in Christ. It must appeal to the spirit by the might of the spirit. It is right when it proclaims the need for faith. It is right if it says that faith is a form of reason. It is right, too, when it says that faith is also the working of an inner disposition or affection, proceeding from what is Divine, and carrying us into communion with the Divine. But it is wrong if it supposes that it can quicken and maintain this holy

temper by any other power than a temper corresponding to it.

We cannot be both free and bound. It is impossible for God Himself, by the mere exercise of a constraining Omnipotence, to compel men to love Him. He could conceivably crush and annihilate them, leaving them without being and sense; but if we believe Him to have made them in spirit free—having a power of turning from Him, as of turning towards Him—He can only win them and hold them by the spirit—by presenting Himself to them as a transcendent, attractive Perfection of love and wisdom. The rulers and teachers of the Catholic Church ought not to mistake their own defects of temper, or of mind and speech, for a manifestation of the Divine. And, of course, what we say in this connection of the Catholic Church applies, *a fortiori*, to all other Christian communities. The sovereign mind of modern Humanity—sovereign because holding, and sovereign only when so holding, the great things of Catholicism in alliance with all the other powers of culture—will certainly not accord to an Anglican clergyman or a Presbyterian minister a title of mere arbitrary assertion or denunciation which it denies to a Catholic priest.

Faith, then—on which the Catholic Church so strongly insists, and which sometimes seems irreconcilable with demonstration—is itself demonstrably a thing which falls within the province of reason. It is reasonable and necessary to believe many things which we have not ourselves proved. We exercise such a faith in accordance with the nature of our desires and needs. When we so exercise it for practical ends, we are resting on the experience of others, and in proportion as we so exercise it, we subject it to the tests of a new experience. It is clear that if we thus understand the reasonableness and place of faith, giving to it the authority of demonstration, we establish a principle which assigns to the Catholic Church a natural pre-eminence and suzerainty in religion. Here, as elsewhere, it can afford to make an

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appeal to the modern mind. The modern mind, which must disallow it in so far as it denies the principles of progress and liberty, and in so far as it seeks to secure the great good of faith by threats and denunciation, must allow it to be a supreme depositary and custodian of human experience in the realm of religion. In things religious the Catholic Church has a sure and great title to be considered the voice of Humanity—by whose acceptance and ratification, as we have seen, all religions live and work their work in the world. It has this sure and great title because it is the complete expression of the spiritual order founded on Christ. It has this title because the Greek Church and the Protestant Churches, which have broken away from it, exhibit, in their presentation of Christ, no power of religion which is not contained in Catholicism, while many of its powers contained in Catholicism are not contained in them. It has this title because it has, in a high degree, preserved universality and continuity in that sphere of the life of Humanity in which Humanity has been most progressive in mind and practical power. It has the title of a persisting life where human life has been lived in the highest plane, and has exhibited the fullest development and variety.

If, therefore, we are concerned for the things of religion, the Catholic Church has a greater natural claim to our faith than any other body—such a faith as may move us to submit our minds to it for the practical ends of religion, as we submit our minds to a doctor or a teacher for the practical ends of health or science. We may, of course, once more, not have this concern for the things of religion. We may be atheists. We may, on grounds which seem to us rational and satisfactory, cease to pray and worship, so wholly rejecting the Catholic spiritual order, and passing out of the community of Christendom. If, however, we choose religion, we choose faith; and a reasonable faith in religion is one which gives us access to the mind of Humanity, working, and working for the longest time and

most universally, in the highest plane of religious experience and effort. A reasonable faith in religion brings us to the Catholic Church, as the supreme practical organ of Christ in the world. By such a reasonable faith in Catholicism—a faith directed to certain specific spiritual ends, and exercised for the sake of those ends—we do not abandon the way of reason, any more than we abandon it when we go in faith to a doctor or teacher. On the contrary, by this exercise of faith which carries us to Catholicism we take only the first step in the way of reason, in which we have afterwards to take other steps. In taking these other steps we are subjecting our faith, which is an appeal to experience, to the tests of a further experience. Our faith in Catholicism is a product of need and reason. Our need is not Christ only, but universality in Christ—not Christ for ourselves alone, but Christ penetrating and ordering the entire life of Humanity; and our reason naturally carries us to that Church which, although it has visibly not accomplished universality in Christ, has yet always cherished and promoted this ideal, and has approximated the most to its fulfilment.

We may, therefore, and quite reasonably, lay down the general principle that, in reference to this great aim, there is a scientific presumption in favour of the Catholic Church—a presumption that its statements of doctrine, its modes and forms of worship, its spiritual organization and rule of conduct, are in greater or less correspondence with the needs and reason of man, as a religious and social being seeking the realization of Christ in the life of Humanity. A presumption, of course, is only a presumption; it is not a proof. Faith is demonstrably reasonable, but faith is not the same thing as demonstration. Our trust in a doctor, when subjected to the tests of experience, may prove fatal to his claims. Humanity has tested and is testing the rulers of the Catholic Church in relation to its professed aims, and it may conceivably, as a result of the test, decide against them. Our hope is that it will not.

But in any case the double canon which we have formulated is a reasonable canon: (1) The Catholic Church, in order that it may master the forces of the modern mind, put an end to the religious revolution, and establish a progressive universality in Christ, must wield the authority of demonstration; (2) considering that the Catholic Church is the highest and fullest expression of the mind of Humanity, endeavouring after universality in Christ, there is a reasonable presumption that beneath its great conceptions, its doctrines, its formularies, its modes of worship, and its rule of life, there is a content of permanent positive truth which, by a process of demonstration, may be discerned, and which, when so discerned, may be brought into synthetic and organic relation with all other positive powers of human culture. In degree, there is a similar presumption in favour of even the smallest of Christian sects, because the smallest of such sects contains something of Catholicism. If, however, the modern mind is to undertake the task of discerning and preserving the positive contents of Christianity, with a view to the religious development and unification of man, it will certainly not make this effort on behalf of a sect, which can plead no large human presumption in its favour; it will make it on behalf of that great Spiritual order from which the various sects have broken away, and from which they yet derive such title as they possess.

CHAPTER XII

ON THE SUPERNATURAL

WHEN we say that Catholicism, in order to command the powers of the modern mind, must arm itself with the authority of demonstration, we mean that for all its great words, conceptions, doctrines, institutions, and prescriptions, it must be prepared, in so far as the need arises, to find a positive meaning of reality and utility, in accordance with man's permanent and progressive experience, outer and inner. By the modern mind, as we have seen, we mean especially the mind of Western Europe carried to its highest point of consciousness and culture, and resting, therefore, on a sum of irreversible acquisitions and progressions. Such a mind—the sovereign mind of a developed Humanity—is, we repeat, not rightly expressed in terms of negation and rejection, but in terms of affirmation and possession. It is not, therefore, revolutionary in regard to Catholicism, except in so far as Catholicism appears unable or unwilling to satisfy this demand which it addresses to it—the demand for demonstration in relation to the great constituents, theoretical and practical, of the Catholic spiritual order. Such a demand is, in itself, certainly not hostile to the Catholic Church. It may proceed, as we are at present supposing it to proceed, from a presumption in favour of that Church—a presumption that, as the custodian of man's fullest and highest experience in religion, it has a natural capacity to satisfy this demand. Further, the modern mind, in calling upon Catholicism to meet this

demand for demonstration, does so in order that Catholicism may fulfil itself—put an end to the religious revolution, and so extend the Catholic spiritual order founded on Christ that it may embrace the entire life of Humanity. Such a demand, proceeding from such motives, and directed to such an end, the Catholic Church is bound to satisfy.

One of the master-words of Catholicism—a word of controlling importance in its statements and explanations—is the word “supernatural.” We may, perhaps, better understand the effect of the modern demand for demonstration in relation to the contents of Catholicism if we consider it, in the first instance, as it bears upon this word. And here our preliminary faith in Catholicism, our reasonable presumption in its favour—which, of course, is ultimately a presumption in favour of the mind of Humanity—properly comes to our assistance. We have no right to suppose—what, from a purely revolutionary point of view, we might be inclined to suppose—that a word such as the word “supernatural” has no positive meaning whatever, no meaning of reality and utility in relation to the life of man. What we are entitled to say about it is, first, that if it has no such meaning it is without religious value, and is, indeed, not a Catholic word; secondly, that if it has such a meaning it must, in degree at least, be capable of explanation in terms of human experience, objective or subjective. The fact, however, that this word has so long held a place in the statements and teachings of Catholicism, and that Catholicism, considered as a body of judgments and doctrines, is a part of the progressive rationality of the human mind—this fact affords ground for the presumption that the word has actually, in degree at least, a positive meaning, a meaning of reality and utility, springing out of the relations of the human mind with the sum of its experiences. This meaning it is an obligation for the Catholic Church, in the pursuit of its own causes, and in its appeal to the modern mind, to make known and establish.

When we use the word "supernatural" in connection with Catholicism, we use it with a religious intention, and with reference especially to the great distinctive aim which Catholicism proposes to itself. That aim is to bring mankind into the way of Christ. This aim is a positive aim. It is an aim of reality and utility. As such, it lies within the sphere of demonstration. We may use a still simpler and more familiar word, and say that this aim is a practical aim. Especially is it this as Catholicism conceives and defines it, for Catholicism, pre-eminent in worship as it is, and strongly as it insists on faith, insists also, and not less strongly, on conduct or "works." By bringing mankind into the way of Christ, it means bringing mankind into the life in Christ. This life in Christ—here using the word "life" as equivalent to conduct—demands, indeed, that it should be rightly conceived and understood; and hence the necessity for doctrine. It demands, too, that there should be a quick and steady feeling in the mind, impelling us to pursue it; and hence the necessity for worship. Our life in Christ, however, is the test and ultimate expression of our belief in Christ and our love for Him. Therefore, we repeat, the great aim of Catholicism is to lead men to the life in Christ, and to keep them progressively in it; and it is in reference to this controlling aim—a positive and practical aim—that the language employed by Catholicism must always be understood.

When, consequently, we read in a Catholic writer—to take one out of innumerable examples that might be adduced—that "God has been pleased to call man to a supernatural end—*i.e.*, to a destiny out of all proportion to the exigencies of his nature, and which cannot be attained by the use of his natural powers"—when we read such a statement we are entitled to call upon Catholicism to show in what way the word "supernatural" is here employed relatively to the life in Christ. By the life in Christ we mean not feeling only, or thought only, but action—action,

undoubtedly, inspired by certain feelings and guided by certain thoughts, but still action. Christianity—that life according to Christ which has progressively realized itself in the being of Humanity during nineteen hundred years—has been a practical thing. The language addressed by Christ to His immediate disciples—and addressed, therefore, indirectly to all who have been His followers since—is almost always practical, even when it is, as it so often is, figurative and parabolical. It is, therefore, incumbent on Catholicism, when it says that man is called to a “supernatural” end—to a destiny which cannot be attained by the use of his natural powers—to find for the word “supernatural” a meaning positive and practical, lying within the sphere of demonstration, and reconcilable with the supreme aim which it proposes to itself—the bringing of mankind into the way of Christ. This it is not really difficult for it to do.

The nature of man—like the natures of the lower animals and of inanimate objects—is, of course, made known to us by experience. History, in the full sense of this word, is the book of human nature; and when, in reference to human nature, we wish to supplement the records and interpretations of history by the analytic and systematic explanations of science, it is especially to such sciences as the sciences of morals, sociology, and biology that we turn, resting, as they obviously do, on those lower sciences—the sciences of chemistry, physics, astronomy, and mathematics—which help to unfold to us the forces and laws of man and his environment. To these great sources we may add our common personal experience and observation, including our consciousness and knowledge of ourselves. History, completely considered, embracing literature and the arts; science in its fullest extent; common sense in its largest meaning—these are our authorities for human nature. Together they may be taken to represent what we call experience; and this word, conversely, may serve as a condensed expression

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of them. What human nature is, and what it is capable of, we know from this large record of experience; and what the Catholic Church says about human nature is, therefore, subject ultimately to the tests which experience supplies.

Now, human nature, as it is shown to us in experience, is, as we all know, a nature of various kinds. Man is, to use the word of the ancient world, a microcosm. He contains within himself, and represents, not the distinctive nature of Humanity alone—that nature which expresses itself in social and moral life—but also those “lower natures,” as we call them, which are proper to vegetables and animals and to inorganic objects. It is for this reason that fully to interpret man, according to the principles and methods of science, we need, not one science, but all the sciences—not one order and expression of experience only, but all its orders and forms of expression. It is, however, for our present purpose, especially important to recall the obvious truth that human nature, besides having the distinctive attributes of Humanity, has also the attributes of animality. It has these human attributes and animal attributes in combination. We may, of course, consider each of them separately, and in the abstract. We may think of man’s Humanity and disregard the animal in him, or think of his “lower nature” as being, so to speak, transformed and exalted by the effect upon it of the higher. This is what Shakespeare’s Antony does when he says of Brutus:

“His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix’d in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, ‘This was a man.’”

But when we are forming an estimate of human nature—and this we must do if we are to find a religious meaning for the word “supernatural”—we are not entitled to define that nature in terms of its animal attributes alone, any more than we are entitled to define it in terms of its distinctively human attributes alone. Man’s nature is such that he exercises discrimination upon himself. He knows

that he contains the animal within him. He feels his fellowship with the beasts of the field. But this animal which is in him, in degree at least, he allows or disallows. He eats and drinks, but he also says, "I must eat to live, not live to eat"; and he denounces himself as a glutton or drunkard when he fails to act according to this rule. He propagates his species, but if the instinct of sex which is in him masters him and sets its stamp upon his life, he sits in judgment upon himself and calls himself licentious. He hates, but he also loves. He kills, but he also protects and cherishes. He destroys, but he also constructs. He has truly and visibly within him the same needs and passions as the lowest animal, and is as much dependent upon physical nourishment as is the humblest plant; but he carries a universe about in his soul; he measures the skies and the stars; he follows a spiritual ideal; he is haunted by shapes of perfection; he has created the glories of the arts; he is a builder of civilizations; he is a lord of the very forces which master him, and converts heat, and light, and water, and electricity, and a hundred other material powers, into instruments of his ruling spirit. It is in the nature of this human nature, in which appetite and sex are at work, to rebuke sex and appetite; to form for itself a spiritual home in convent or monastery; to praise chastity; to observe a fast; to practise religious submission and discipline; to acknowledge a principle of sanctity; and to erect majestic temples in which to express, in words and tones and forms of beauty, its homage to the beauty of the Divine. It is this human nature, in which the pig may be discerned; which, according to modern speculation, has an ape for its ancestor; and which may be hypothetically resolved at last into atoms and ether—it is this nature which, in its grossness, its weakness, and its ignorance, has yet set up as its highest symbols of ideal goodness a crucified Figure of self-sacrificing Love, and a Mother of Immaculate Purity, offering her Child to mankind.

This is the "nature" of man, as it is unfolded to us in

experience. It is thus unfolded to us, as it is hardly necessary to say, not in one age or place of man alone, but in almost all ages and places within the scope of a developed civilization. It is perfectly true, as we have all along said—true, that is, unless language is devoid of significance, and we are without a measure of value in regard to the being and powers of Humanity—that the greatest glory of human nature, in all its aspects, is to be found expressed in Western Christendom. But it is not less certainly true that all its higher attributes are to be seen manifested, in degree, in the pre-Christian world as in the Christian, and in the East as in the West. Man, who denies the flesh and asserts the spirit ; man, who abjures the lower self and follows an exalting love ; man, who lives and dies for others ; man, the artist, the thinker, the citizen, the worker—this man whom we find in Italy, or France, or Spain, or England, we find also in ancient Greece and Rome, as well as in India, China, or Arabia. The human nature which we have sketched, therefore—a nature moving at one end of the scale in the highest spiritual plane, sinking, at the other, to the lowest level of animal life, and yet capable, in its discernment of these differences in itself, of consciously rising from the low to the high—this nature is not Christian only, it is universal, even although it is certainly not everywhere manifested with equal amplitude and splendour.

We are not entitled, consequently, when we are trying to represent the “nature” of man, to dismiss from it what is distinctively human, and think only of what is distinctively animal. Human nature is the nature which received Christ. It was not to an animal that He addressed the words, “Take up thy cross, and follow Me.” It was not an animal that found itself able to respond to that appeal. If we had only the book of Christian history from which to judge of human nature, we should still find that nature—even when approaching the Divine in the Holy of Holies—a thing of animal impulse and passion ; and if, similarly,

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we had only the non-Christian records of man, we should still see him, base indeed, but able also, in degree, to rule himself, deny himself, and raise himself to a vision and pursuit of the things of perfection. What St. Paul says of the ancient Jews is true also of the ancient Gentiles: "For they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ."

The nature of man being thus ascertained from experience—it being thus conclusively shown that man, universally considered, contains within his being, as natural and persisting powers, the highest spiritual things, as well as the lowest physical things—
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 Supernatural. we are now in a position to see what is the religious meaning of the word "supernatural," as Catholicism has employed it. Catholicism has meant by "supernatural," in so far as it has used the word with a religious intention, the highest nature known to us—that faculty of Humanity by which it recognizes and affirms a supreme spiritual or moral perfection, and deliberately orders itself, negatively and positively—by the disallowance and restraint of certain things in itself, by the sanction and culture of certain others—with a view to its realization. This highest human nature is the "supernatural," in so far as the word "supernatural" has a valid meaning in the sphere of religion. We may say, in short, using the words of so great a Catholic writer as Cardinal Newman, that we "mean by the supernatural the perfection of nature." The reason why we call it supernatural is just as apparent as the reason why we call it natural. We call this spiritual faculty—this discernment and choice of a highest goodness—natural because we find it, in degree, wherever we find man. It is, in the language of science, a universal and recurrent phenomenon—as universal and recurrent, in degree, as is that part of his nature which we call animal—the nature of nutrition and sex. We call this faculty natural, in a word, because we have the warrant of a uniform experience for so calling it.

But we have also the warrant of experience—and this on no mere principle of paradox or contradiction—for calling it supernatural. The difference between the natural and the supernatural, in the region of religion, is the difference between the lowest and the highest, between the ordinary and the extraordinary. A limited, elementary discernment of good and evil is common to all men. Society could not exist without it. An exalted sense and discernment of ideal good, an overmastering choice and pursuit of it, a complete ordering and unification of life with a view to its fulfilment—these things are not common. They have been present in degree, it is true, in all ages and societies of civilized man, and in this sense they are natural; but they have existed in rare moments and with rare men, and in this sense they are supernatural. They are above the nature of the average man in its ordinary working. Between the average man and the saint, of course, there is not an impassable gulf. The average man has his moments of high impulse and vision. He is sometimes, as we say, caught up out of himself. He prays. He worships. He knows what it is to rule the flesh and exercise the lordship of the spirit. Being an average man, with an average life—a life of ordinary instincts and interests—he is also, at times, exalted into a higher plane, and feels and beholds things to which he is commonly a stranger. The difference between him and the saint is that he ascends seldom where the saint inhabits almost always. The “saint,” moreover, is—or may seem to the common man to be—one who is almost spontaneously, and therefore supernaturally, endowed with high perceptions and powers, as compared with the average person, who reaches them, if at all, seldom and with difficulty. To such a saint, so clothed with the faculties of the upper nature, the ordinary man may feel moved to say :

“Thou liest in Abraham’s bosom all the year;
And worship’st at the Temple’s inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.”

In reference to Catholicism, therefore, the word "supernatural" means that which is highest in the scale of nature. As it is hardly necessary to point out, the idea of the supernatural has often been associated with other faculties of man than those of his spiritual or moral nature. Catholicism did not bring in what we may call the principle of the supernatural; it only brought in—or, rather, brought in in a pre-eminent degree—a particular application of it. In the ancient world every unusual human faculty—artistic, philosophic, political, industrial—was regarded as supernatural; and, indeed, the commonest functions of ordinary life were considered as being under the patronage of some special and appropriate deity. It was the world of the Muses and the gods—the world of Apollo, Minerva, and Vulcan. The great change which Catholicism accomplished in relation to the idea of the supernatural was twofold. First, it limited to a single one the human faculties which were regarded as religiously supernatural; secondly, it chose as that one the discernment and pursuit of moral perfection. Since the acceptance of Christianity there has, perhaps, been no instance of the direct apotheosis of the merely intellectual or practical powers of man, or of any attributes of nature, animate or inanimate, lower than the human. According to the conceptions of Catholicism, not only was God made man, or Humanity, but He took upon Himself the highest nature of Humanity only—the nature of man when he "makes his moral being his prime care," and exercises sovereignty over himself for the sake of a distant and ideal spiritual perfection. Christ has never been conceived of as clothed with the greatness of a poet, artist, philosopher, political legislator, or industrial genius; He has been conceived of as a Being of spiritual perfection, Lord of the flesh, Lord of the lower longings, beautiful in the harmonious direction of all His powers towards the ideal end of a self-renouncing service of others, and fulfilling Himself, not by great æsthetic, intellectual, or prac-

tical constructions, but by giving forth the illuminating wisdom of pure love, and by a self-imposed death on the Cross. Catholicism, therefore, which has been the worship and realization of Christ, has been the worship and realization of ideal goodness—of that “supernatural” which is the highest nature.

It is for this reason, amongst others, that the various attempts which have been of late years made to resolve the idea of Christ into what is often called a “nature-myth” so obviously rest on a complete misconception of the historic meaning of Christianity. They proceed, not from the science of the modern mind, but from its revolutionary bewilderment—a bewilderment which is naturally accompanied by a loss of spiritual, and therefore of historic, perception, and which causes men to confound with Christianity the very things which it was the religious mission of Christianity in the world to displace and supersede. Christianity is not distinguished by its affirmation of the supernatural, since such an affirmation was characteristic of the whole ancient world; it is not distinguished by a direct apotheosis of the lower natures of the animal, vegetable, and material orders, or of man’s intellectual and practical faculties, since such an apotheosis visibly passed away in proportion as Christianity prevailed; it is not even distinguished by its pre-eminent insistence on the moral attributes of God, since such an insistence is characteristic of Judaism; it is distinguished by its recognition of the truth that the highest conceivable nature, the nature of the supernatural, is manifested in the nature of Humanity, as Humanity is penetrated by the consciousness of a transcendent spiritual personal perfection, and orders all its powers, of body and mind, with a view to its realization. Christianity, in a single word, is distinguished by the doctrine of the Incarnation—by its proclamation of the eternal truth that God is revealed in the personal, representative Humanity of Christ—in man, that is, as man is made known to us in his fullest lordship over his lower nature, and in the fullest develop-

ment of his highest. This doctrine, this proclamation, are not alone contained explicitly in a theory or doctrine of the supernatural; they are contained implicitly and symbolically in that which has been more potent than any doctrine—the persisting personal Image, or Holy Spirit, of the Divine Christ—not the image of a setting and rising sun, but of the Perfect Man—which, through the centuries, by the attractive force of its own pure radiance, has progressively wrought upon the spirit of Humanity.

When, therefore, Catholicism says that man is called to a supernatural end, to a destiny which cannot be attained

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Super-
naturalism.

by the use of his natural powers, it uses language which is reasonable and legitimate, provided always that we understand by the word “supernatural,” as we have every warrant for doing, the highest spiritual or moral nature of which we can form a conception, and which is, above all, represented for us in the Humanity of Christ. Such a meaning of the word “supernatural” is not only demonstrable, but demonstrably religious. This becomes the clearer when we compare such a sense of the term with others which are often attached to it, but which have yet no apparent connection with the spiritual aims of Catholicism. The word “supernatural,” for instance, is sometimes employed as if it were equivalent to “inexplicable.” It is evident that it is wrongly so employed. A supernatural fact, in that religious sense of the word which we have just established—a fact, that is, of man’s highest moral nature—may indeed be inexplicable, but the mere fact that it is inexplicable does not make it supernatural. There are very many phenomena of common experience—as, for example, atmospheric electricity, or the nature of life, or the determination of sex in procreation, or the nature of a number of diseases—of which we are compelled to say that they are at present inexplicable, in this plain sense that we are unable to resolve given recurring resultants into the specific recurring conditions or relations out of which they spring.

But we do not, because these resultants are thus inexplicable, describe them as supernatural. If by supernatural we mean simply what is inexplicable, then we must say that the whole of nature—including human nature—is supernatural, and we have thus no longer the power of distinguishing, in this respect, between Catholicism and any other fact of experience. We do not, however, speak of believing in “inexplicable religion”; we speak of believing in “supernatural religion,” and this because it is the office of religion, and of Catholicism most of all, to direct us towards the highest conceivable type of nature.

We reach a similar conclusion if we define a “supernatural” attribute or event as one which is not only inexplicable, but contrary to our uniform experience. When we attend a spiritualistic séance, we may see, or believe ourselves to see, a table, on which a number of human hands are resting, rising in the air, in a way apparently irreconcilable with the law of gravitation. Of this phenomenon, assuming it to be verified, and not to be produced by a trick, we are not, of course, obliged to accept what is called the spiritualistic “explanation.” We may limit ourselves—as scientifically we are fully entitled to do—to recognizing its recurrence, under the given conditions, if it does so recur, and to saying that it is in the nature of a table, in such conditions, and for reasons not yet explained, to act in the way described. If, however, after having exhausted all scientific hypotheses, we decide to accept the spiritualistic assumption—that the levitation of the table is due to the action of disembodied human “spirits” co-operating with living persons—still, that assumption has clearly not, in itself, a religious character. The levitation of a table, as such, is obviously not a religious event. Even if it took place without the contact of human hands—if the table suddenly and spontaneously rose in the air without any apparent cause—we might, indeed, consider such an occurrence disturbing and wonderful, but we could not, therefore, call it religious. The

levitation of a table, if it is not in itself a religious event, does not become religious by being ascribed to disembodied human spirits. What an invisible spirit does is not, simply because it is done by an invisible spirit, any more religious than what is done by a living and visible man or woman. A phenomenon may be "spiritualistic" without being, in the Catholic sense of the word, spiritual. It may be supernatural, in the sense of being both inexplicable and contrary to our experience of nature, organic or inorganic, but it may have no power whatever of relating us to Christ, Who represents the only "supernatural," or highest, nature with which, in religion, we are supremely concerned.

It may be argued that the levitation of a table, if we grant it to be due, in part, to the action of disembodied human "spirits," is, even if not in itself a religious event, yet one of supreme importance, regarded as a proof that there is a constituent of human nature which, in some way, survives after death, and which, amongst other things, has the capacity, in conjunction with living persons, of causing the levitation of solid bodies. We may even go further, and consider ourselves entitled to regard it as a demonstration of what we call "immortality"—as establishing the fact that, under circumstances which we cannot specify or apprehend, there is something in man which, after his apparent death, somewhere and in some way, continues to "exist," if we may so use a word which is a word of definite persisting experiences and relations in reference to inconceivable experiences and relations. This is true. No one can deny that a decisive scientific proof of what we call a "life after death"—especially if it were accompanied by a precise determination of the nature and situation of that life—would be a fact of transcendent interest and importance to man. It is equally clear, however, that, in itself, it would have no necessary connection with religion. We cannot say that the idea of an indefinite continuance of human life—either in the world which we know or in some other "world" of which

Immortality
and Religion.

we are unable to form a conception—has, in itself, a necessary bearing upon religion. A man who is a centenarian may obviously have had less religion in his life than a man who has only lived for twenty years. A baptized infant, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, if it dies, goes straight to heaven, having by a few hours of consecrated and untainted life secured eternal felicity. The doctrine of human “immortality,” standing by itself, is no more a religious doctrine than the doctrine of the persistence of force. “What profits it to live long,” says Thomas à Kempis, “when we are so little the better? Ah, a long life does not always mend us, but often adds to our guilt! Would that we had passed but one day well in this world!”

The idea of “eternity,” of an indefinite continuance of certain things, has undoubtedly rooted itself in the human mind, but what is supposed to be eternal is, as we all know, not necessarily supposed to be good. Catholicism, in its traditional teaching, assumes an eternity of evil. God, Who is the ultimate source and principle of Good, has unending continuance as one of His attributes; but so, according to our popular theology, have the Devil and the lost spirits who are associated with him. In so far as men in Catholicism have been able to form a conception of a “supernatural” future, it has been a future in which evil and good, God and the Devil, Heaven and Hell, confront each other, as fixed, unchangeable powers, each within its own domain, to all eternity. In the idea of unending vital continuance, or of a bare “immortality,” considered in itself, there is not necessarily a religious significance. On the other hand, it is clear that in such an idea there is nothing antagonistic to religion. The average duration of human life has apparently been progressively extended. If we knew that it was possible to indefinitely extend it on earth—or if we could form a clear conception of a state in which something analogous to what we now call human life would be indefinitely continued after “death”—religion,

directing us to the highest nature, or to the "supernatural" in Christ, would still have that claim upon us which is given to it by the persisting ideals and affirmations of the human spirit. But its claim does not depend on such a hypothesis. It is not "eternity" in itself, but the eternity of these ideals and affirmations, that is, in religion, the important thing. "This is eternal life, that they know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent."

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE MIRACULOUS

WHAT we have said upon the meaning of the word “supernatural” in its relation to Catholicism has an obvious bearing upon the religious value of the companion word “miracle.” A miracle may be defined, in general terms, as an event contrary to the order of nature in one or other of its various spheres, and therefore as a proof of the “existence” of forces, of whatever character, capable of bringing about such a result. Strictly speaking, of course, we cannot say that anything “exists” which does not in some specific way relate itself objectively or subjectively to human consciousness. The word “existence,” by its own proper effect, implies a relation of this kind, and has, like all other human terms, originated in our experience of such relations. It is, however, for our present purpose, not less important to recognize that a miracle in itself, assuming its reality, is not a religious event. Still less is it a distinctively Catholic event. The history of the ancient world and of the East is a history of miracle; and, as need hardly be pointed out, an event which in one stage of human culture is regarded as miraculous is, under the influence of a wider and exacter knowledge—even although it may still inspire a feeling of wonder—considered as belonging to the order of natural relations. To the modern mind, therefore—the sovereign mind of a developed Humanity—the question of the occurrence of miracles, in the old sense, is ceasing to be a subject of interest. The modern mind recognizes that miracles “occur” in an age

of miracles—in an age when men, by their habits of mind, and the limitations of exact and tested experience, are spontaneously disposed to view with alarm or astonishment, or to regard as “supernatural,” any unaccustomed natural event or exercise of human powers. Perhaps, indeed, it is no paradox to say that the idea of miracle does not take shape until the age of miracle, in a great degree, is passing away. In the ages of miracle men were not penetrated by the idea of uniform and measurable natural relations. They expected “miracle” where the modern mind expects law, and were as ready to put a “supernatural” interpretation upon an eclipse of the sun, or the appearance of a rainbow, or a thunderstorm, or the flight of a bird, or an exhibition of unusual faculties in man, as the modern mind, in the fulness of its ordered experiences, is to accept an explanation of such things in terms of the positive sciences.

The Catholic Church spontaneously, and in its own way, shows its sense of this truth, for, even while continuing to affirm the uninterrupted possibility of miracles, it does not exact from the faithful a belief in any miracles other than those recorded in Scripture. It indicates the same sense of the importance of this difference between one intellectual sphere, or order of mind, and another by arguing that miracles may still continue to have a use as aids to the “conversion of the heathen.” It would seem, on the face of it, that a miracle occurring in Western Europe in the twentieth century ought to have a greater value than one in the first century, since it can scarcely be doubted that the experienced and orderly modern mind is more capable of investigating facts and testing evidence than the minds of primitive Christianity. Nevertheless, the instinct of the Catholic Church in this matter is sound. The modern mind has little interest in miracles, as mere disturbances of the natural order; and, what is of even more consequence, it recognizes that such a disturbance, even if we assume its occurrence, is in itself destitute of religious significance. A miracle, considered as a mere interruption

of the natural order, has, of course, no more religious importance than a volcanic eruption or a chemical experiment.

Of this, too, the Catholic Church shows its sense. It uniformly associates the idea of miracle with the idea of pre-eminent sanctity, and thus presses it into the service of religion. In itself, miracle has no such association. The Devil is regarded as having a mastery over the forces of nature, and as employing it for evil ends. He is a power of temptation. The miracles of modern spiritualism, too—or, as they are often called, its “phenomena”—are, as we have already seen, in themselves devoid of religious meaning. According to some of its records, men in recent years have been proved to possess the power of passing through a wall, as, in the New Testament, Jesus Christ is said to have done. The modern mind, however, has for the most part been little moved by the accounts of these contemporary marvels, although the “miracles” of spiritualism have certainly received the attestation of trained investigators in a much greater degree than was possible with those of the earlier stages of human history.

As we have so frequently said in the course of this work, things have precisely the importance which is given to them by the permanent and progressive mind of Humanity. The mind of Humanity has certainly not ceased to attach importance to religious and spiritual truth. It has not ceased to have a sense of the inexplicable and mysterious in the realms of external nature and its own internal consciousness. But it is ceasing to be interested in miracles, and it no longer regards such events as a support to religion. Demonstration, in this respect, has taken their place. In the biography of a person well known in England, in the nineteenth century, as “Father Ignatius,” we read of many miracles performed by him—amongst others of how, in the year 1862, a girl in London, who had died of typhoid fever, came to life again at his command, and lived for some time afterwards. Such an event we

may properly describe as "supernatural," if by "supernatural" we mean inexplicable and contrary to nature, and it was in this sense religious, that it was assumed to be due to the exceptional sanctity of the person who performed the miracle. Nevertheless, the contemporaries of Father Ignatius have been apparently much less impressed by the miracles which he wrought, or which were associated with him, than by the fact that he went about in a monastic dress, and tried to revive the Order of St. Benedict in the Church of England. The modern mind is not interested in miracles because it is penetrated by the sense of law, and because it recognizes that the life of man, in whatever sphere—physical, intellectual, and religious—must be based, not on what is simply inexplicable and exceptional, even assuming its reality, but on what is known and constant. It is not interested in the alleged resurrection of a person who died from typhoid fever, but it would be profoundly interested in any certain cure for that disease, and still more in its complete prevention. It is not interested in the spiritualistic "medium" who passes through a wall, or mysteriously causes a curtain at a distance to flutter, but it follows with keen attention the development of aviation or wireless telegraphy. It is not interested in the monk who, for his own private convenience, is represented as miraculously renewing the strength of a horse on a difficult journey, but it is certainly sympathetic with all attempts to improve the treatment of the lower animals.

It is, on the other hand, deeply interested in the miracles ascribed to Christ in the New Testament, and this not because they have in themselves an absolute religious value, or because they possess an objective historic warrant, but because they are part of the spiritual picture painted of Him in the consciousness of Christendom, and because, also, they symbolize that ascendancy, direct and indirect, which the truly "supernatural" powers of man—the powers of his highest nature, typified by the Divine

Christ—exercise over all lower natures. So considered, the miracles of Our Lord have a lasting representative significance—a significance which, as the Catholic Church rightly recognizes, does not attach to any others. The many miracles, for example, ascribed to St. Benedict, and other saints, do not impress us, and frequently appear trivial. They have the air of something conventional and artificial. The miracles of the Gospels, on the contrary, seem to be in natural harmony with the Transcendent Figure Who is there depicted, and to enter fitly into the revelation of His Divinity. They are a part of the spiritual manifestation of Our Lord, and have, in relation to later miracles, the effect of an original masterpiece, fashioned out of the first sincerity and truth of genius, when compared with the mechanical imitations of it by smaller minds. At the same time, the Divinity of Christ, in its supernatural perfection—the incarnation and type of the highest nature of Humanity—this is not affected by any view which we may take of His miracles, considered merely as objective historic events. It is He Who gives to them such significance as they have, not they who give significance to Him. Miracles pass; Christ remains. The modern mind, therefore—that modern mind which is not the separate mind of a particular age, but the developed mind of a continuous Humanity—may, precisely because it is ceasing to be interested in miracles, as mere violations of the natural order, say with St. Paul: “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That is as truly a representation of the modern mind as any utterance which is distinctively its own.

In the word “supernatural,” then, as it is doctrinally employed by Catholicism, there are two main meanings—first, a meaning merely negative and privative, a complete disallowance or repudiation of nature and man; secondly, a

meaning positive and religious, which directs the religious spirit to its goal, and shows it the highest nature as represented in Christ. To the first of these meanings the modern mind, seeking in religion things sure and high, accords no place; the second it accepts. In other words, it rejects in the idea of the supernatural what is plainly not religious at all, but only a negative metaphysical abstraction; it sanctions in it a sense which is demonstrably Catholic, and which relates us to the great object of Catholicism. The modern mind in this exercises a natural and indefeasible sovereignty. The word "supernatural" is a part of the linguistic possessions of man. It has proceeded from his creative and progressive intelligence, working upon the things of experience. It is for the developed reason of a mature Humanity, looking back upon its past, and commenting upon its own experiences and expressions, to declare, in terms of analysis and system, what they have meant, and what they must continue to mean.

The
Interpretative
Modern
Mind.

CHAPTER XIV

ON THE IDEA OF GOD

IN its positive, intelligible and religious sense—that sense which has been given to it by a spiritual and practical

Catholicism—the word “supernatural” is equivalent to the word “Divine.” That is supernatural

^{The Word}
“God.”

which belongs to the things of God, as God is given to us, a Being of holiness and spiritual light, in the consciousness and experience of man. When we say this we are naturally led to consider the meaning of the word “God” itself, from that point of view of demonstration—a demonstration of reality and use—which, as we have said, is characteristic of the modern mind. This, to some extent, we have already done. We have all along proceeded upon the principle that for Christendom God is Christ—that God in Christ, and as Christ, is the foundation and centre of the Catholic spiritual order. This is undoubtedly true. Nevertheless, as we all know, the conception of God as Christ does not exist by itself in the consciousness of Christendom; it exists in relation to that more general conception of the Supreme Being which, in its various forms, is common to all religions, and which we denote by the absolute word “God.” That word, standing alone, is, of course, as we have already pointed out, a word only. As we ordinarily use it, we use it with all the powers and traditions of a definite religion clinging to it. When, however, we are examining it from the point of view of the modern mind, asking for demonstration, we have to recognize that this word—supreme, august, universal as

it is—is still only a word. It is, in the abstract, possible that the human mind, while holding obstinately to what is permanent and essential in the conception of God, might yet choose another verbal symbol to represent it. This it has, in principle, the power to do; but this it is not in the least likely to do. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the fully conscious modern mind, in its deliberate, rational, analytic processes, distinguishes between words and things, and that the disuse or rejection of a term does not necessarily imply the lapse of the idea or principle which the term denotes. If the word “God” represents a permanent reality of man’s consciousness and experience, that reality would not lose being and power if we denoted it by another symbol.

We are not now, however, concerned with the word “God” as a bare and abstract term; we are concerned with it as an expression of the conception of
 The Trinity. Divinity which has entered into the order of Catholicism. From this point of view, it is obvious that the idea of Christ, supreme as is its importance in Catholic doctrine, is yet not, in itself, sufficient to embrace the full meaning of the word “God” as Catholicism employs it. The Catholic doctrine of God is the doctrine of a Trinity. In relation to this stupendous conception we are putting ourselves at the point of view of the modern mind as, in the exercise of its natural authority, it continues and develops Catholicism, and not at the point of view of the merely revolutionary mind which rejects it. The revolutionary mind, in its later Protestant and theistic manifestations, makes a vain and ineffectual attempt to grapple, objectively and metaphysically, with the problem of the Trinity, and ends by repudiating the idea entirely. This it considers to be progress. The modern mind, on the contrary, as we have throughout conceived it, is a mind not negative and disruptive, but conservative and synthetic. Progress to it, as we have seen, is the development of an order—a development dependent upon preservation; and although it insists

on demonstration, and on liberty as a condition of demonstration, it recognizes that demonstration should be controlled by faith. In the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, therefore—which is a doctrine of the human reason occupied with spiritual things—it is sure, to begin with, that there is a positive religious meaning to be found—a meaning which, throughout the centuries of Christian vitality and development, has given the doctrine a practical value, and which, therefore, the symbolic conception of the Holy Trinity will properly continue to represent. From the point of view of a continuous and constructive modernism, consequently, religious progress, in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, cannot consist in its rejection or deprivation; it must consist in such a determination of its positive and permanent contents, relatively to the mind and life of Humanity, as may conduce to an increase of its significance and ascendancy in the enlarging spirituality of man.

In the religious order of Catholicism Christ is not only God, but He is God the Son, and, of course, such a conception naturally brings into special relief the correlative conception of God as the Father—
 Verbal Symbolism in Religion. a conception which, as it is hardly necessary to say, is so far from being distinctively Christian that it entered into the theology of the whole ancient world. The “Father of gods and men” is a characteristic designation of the supreme deity of polytheism. Here, as so often elsewhere, what Christianity does is not to bring in a new idea or term, but to give to an old conception or expression a new purity and elevation. Christianity, when it arose in the world, was, as we have acknowledged in an earlier part of this work, necessarily subject, in degree, to the controlling genius of the Humanity which preceded it.

To thinking minds in Christianity—as distinguished from the minds of popular religious speech and devotion—it has always, we may presume, been, in varying measure,

clear that such a word as "Father," used in connection with the First Person of the Trinity, has, and can have, a symbolic significance only. No one supposes that, in this relation, it has a force exactly equivalent to that which attaches to it in the ordinary speech of man. The ordinary speech of man, when it passes into the language of worship or of theological statement, is immediately raised in the scale of meaning and representation, and gains a range of suggestion, of implication, of imaginative resource, of spiritual subtlety and complexity, infinitely greater than that which primarily belongs to it. It becomes the language of subjective relations, relations of the inner mind of man, rather than of objective relations; of feeling and imagination, rather than of analytic reason; of spiritual vision, rather than of immediate apprehension; of symbol, figure, and analogy, rather than of direct and literal expression; of what is indefinite and unlimited, rather than of what is precise and measurable. This is so obvious, and is so commonly understood, that it would be unnecessary to recall it, were it not for the fact that even those who are perfectly well aware that the conceptions and language of theology are, from beginning to end, thus symbolic and figurative, yet, in their religious arguments and expositions, commonly tend to employ them as they would employ the tested terms and measures of objective science. Against this tendency—a tendency due, doubtless, to the ever-present influence of mental association, and to the traditional sanctity of certain symbols—it is, for the purposes of religious elucidation, necessary for us to be always on our guard. It is certainly a canon of right positive interpretation—in regard to the language and conceptions either of Scripture, or of the Creeds, or of the liturgy, or of dogmatic definitions, or of theological exposition—that that language and those conceptions are throughout to be regarded as having, not the limited value of scientific precision, but the fuller value of symbol and figure, of suggestion and adumbration.

If, for example, we turn to an ordinary popular Catholic Catechism, as it comments upon the Apostles' Creed, we may find, in reference to the words "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father," the statement: "I do not mean that God the Father has hands, for He is a spirit." That is a perfectly just observation, and it recognizes, simply and implicitly, the canon—the sure and obvious canon—which we have just formulated. It is clear, however, that what is said in this Catechism concerning the "hands" of God is true also of other words, not only in this sentence of the Creed, but throughout the Creed as a whole. If it is true that we are using figurative and symbolic language when we are speaking of the "right hand of God," it is certainly not less true that we are using such language when we say of Christ that He "sitteth" at that right hand. It is evident that in the one instance as in the other the words of the Creed are to be understood in what we have now defined as a "supernatural" sense, meaning by this, once more, not a merely negative, non-natural and non-human sense—since this, for religion, is no "sense" at all—but a sense positive and yet elastic, relative to the highest mind and life of man.

But exactly the same principle, as is obvious, applies to the Creed as a whole. It is built up of statements which are plainly not statements of definite objective or external relations, but of relations moral and spiritual in the inner consciousness of Humanity. When, therefore, we read the sentence, "He ascended into Heaven," it is as clear that we are dealing with language of symbol and figure as when we read of Our Lord that He "sitteth at the right hand of God the Father." It is the language of an age when men did not measure their words with scientific exactitude, and when it was natural to conceive of "Heaven" as a region situated somewhere in the sky, and of "Hell" as a place, perhaps, in the bowels of the earth. From such a point of view it was as logical and fitting that men should speak of

Terminology
of the Creeds.

Our Lord as "descending into Hell" or "ascending into Heaven" as it was that they should speak of Him as sitting at the "right hand of God the Father." The words "up" and "down," "right" and "left," of course, have one meaning in their common objective employment, and quite another in their spiritual application. What is "upper" is, in religion, higher or nobler; what is on the right is good, or of greater honour; and what is on the left is, by comparison, evil or less worthy, although, as it is hardly necessary to say, even in religion these distinctions are far from absolute.

If, however, such expressions as "He descended into Hell" and "He ascended into Heaven" are, as they plainly are, simply symbolic and figurative, corresponding directly to nothing in outward human experience, but of almost infinite potency as subjective statements, it is clear that the words "Heaven" and "Hell" themselves have a similar character. If we say—what a modern religious revolutionary may say—that they have no meaning at all, then we are going counter to the human mind, which has given them a meaning; but we are not less going counter to it if we say that they have a literal ascertainable meaning of external experience. Their meaning, once more, is rightly described as "supernatural"—a meaning that is relative to the highest spiritual mind of man, occupied with the inner things of good and evil, but denoting them by terms and images drawn from outward relations. The modern mind—continuous, as it is, with the ancient and medieval minds, and containing them—knows that by "Heaven" and "Hell" we mean, not physical regions, situated above the clouds or beneath the earth, but spiritual regions lying within that boundless and shadowy *orbis terrarum* which we call the consciousness of Humanity. Precisely because it knows this, however, it knows also that Heaven and Hell are symbolic terms of religious reality—that they are not mere words of illusion, but that, proceeding, as they have done, out of the human spirit, they are words of moral

judgment, denoting, on the one hand, the perpetual honour and beatitude which, within its limitless kingdoms, are assigned to the good, and, on the other, the doom of reprobation and exclusion which it pronounces upon the wicked.

In so understanding "Heaven" and "Hell," the modern mind, of course, is in substantial and practical, if not in formal and verbal, accord with the mind of Catholicism. A Catholic theologian does not profess to assign any definite objective meaning, in terms of the natural order and human experience, to the words "Heaven," "Hell," and "Purgatory." He does not profess to know that Heaven is a place in the sky, and Hell a place in the earth; and of Purgatory he expressly declares that what it is and where it is we do not know. To this extent, therefore, these terms are simply terms of denial and negation. They are equivalent to a *non possumus*. The Catholic theologian, however, does not leave them there. He converts them into symbolic terms of judgment—of exaltation, reprobation, and purification. He gives to Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory their true supernatural place—a positive and sure place in the mind of Humanity, that immeasurable spiritual region where the infinite universe lies mirrored, where the image of God has established itself, and where the spirits of men, the good and the evil, of every age and land, and even of the indefinite future, are seen at last living in the light of Paradise or in the darkness and pains of the Inferno. The Catholic theologian, in a word, equally with the modern thinker, looks, in effect, for the meaning of these words to that ultimate tribunal from which all words derive their significance—the shaping, creative mind of man. So looking, he perceives in the terms "Heaven," "Hell," and "Purgatory"—which, physically and cosmically, are devoid of sense—a perpetual value of inner spiritual experience and imagination.

This it is of the last importance, in the interests of Catholic continuity and development, to recognize. The modern mind, we say, presses upon Catholicism a demand

for demonstration, believing, at the same time, that Catholicism, as a great organ of human experience and reason,

has it in its power to satisfy this demand.

The Three
Great Creeds.

Such a demand, so made, is a religious demand.

Its satisfaction would give to Catholicism what it has always claimed, but never possessed—a universal directing power in the religious ordering of mankind. On the other hand, if, in so far as the necessity arises, it is not satisfied, and in proportion as it is not satisfied, Catholicism—that is to say, Christianity in all its historic forms—will tend to pass out of the life of man, and atheism, higher or lower, will tend to reign in its stead. Such documents as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, must either be shown to have a positive and living meaning for the modern mind—a religious meaning, illuminating and inspiring, and capable of entering into the conduct of life—or they will eventually be relegated to a place in the archives of a lapsed terminology. Fortunately, it is, as we have seen, not difficult to find for them such a meaning—a meaning which the modern mind does not invent, but which it discerns and elucidates, applying processes of interpretation and use which, in varying degree, have visibly always been adopted by the mind of the Church. The difference, in this respect, between the modern mind and the mind of the historic Church is that the former, resting on a full range of human experience, does consciously, deliberately, systematically, and completely, what the latter has done spontaneously and in part. The modern mind, following a principle of faith and continuity, has the same competence and authority with regard to the language of the Creeds that it has with regard to the language of Homer or Dante. It understands how far and in what way those Creeds are a representation of the human spirit.

No intelligent person, we must assume, has ever supposed that when, in the Nicene Creed, we speak of Jesus Christ as the “only-begotten Son of God,” we use the word “begotten” in its ordinary sense; or that when we say of

Him that He "came down from Heaven," we speak as of the movement of a physical body from one point of space to another. The modern mind, however—in other words, the fully developed and instructed Catholic mind—does not dismiss these terms as if they were algebraic symbols, destitute of an assignable value. It sees in them, on the contrary—what it sees in the words of a poem, or in the tones of a musical composition, or in the forms and colours of a picture—an expression of inner truths and relations of the human spirit, occupied with its highest interests. Seeing this in them, however, it recognizes also—first, that to employ the statements of the Creeds as tests of belief and as if they were physical formulæ, the signs of unvarying laws, is to make an unintelligent and arbitrary use of them ; secondly, that they cannot be brought into correspondence with scientific reason simply by truncating them, or by subjecting them to subordinate verbal changes. They are not scientific documents ; they are poetic documents. As they stand, they have their own symbolic beauty and power, their own logic, their own order and coherence, their own inherent capacity to uplift the religious spirit, and renew in it a vision and sense of Divine things. The modern mind, preserving, elucidating, and fulfilling the positive truth of Catholicism, neither wishes to reject the Creeds nor to mutilate them, nor to apply to them the crude and materialistic literalism of a narrow "orthodoxy." Its aim is to guard and use them, as great instruments of worship and religious apprehension, which gain ever a wider range of significance as man, in conscious communion with the spirit that gave them forth, moves onward in a fuller and higher realization of the ideals that entered into them.

What has thus been generally said in reference to the conceptions and language of the Creeds applies pre-eminently, of course, to the conceptions and symbols of God. Some Protestant sects have apparently supposed that they could escape from the difficulties of theological thought and

God the
Father.

expression by getting completely rid of the Creeds, and limiting themselves to certain general statements concerning the Divine nature—as, for example, when they speak of the “Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.” In this they have been mistaken. From the point of view of the modern analytic or critical intelligence, insisting on an objective and literal construction of theological terms, the expression “the Fatherhood of God” presents difficulties just as great as are presented by the doctrine of the Trinity, or by any of the statements of the Nicene Creed; and if, by a process of positive interpretation, we can find a meaning of truth and use for this expression, so, by a similar process, we can find it for the historic symbols. The idea that Protestantism, or theism, or Unitarianism, is, in itself, more reasonable, or “rational,” than Catholicism is an idea that most thinking minds, we may suppose, have now abandoned. The contrary is the truth.

In the phrase “the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man”—beautiful and inspiring as it certainly is—we have, just as we have in the Creeds, ideas expressed which have an obvious and universal sense drawn from direct external experience, side by side with others which have plainly only a symbolic and figurative value. To the word “brotherhood”—either as a physical or biological term, or in its higher moral uses—we all attach a definite meaning, and we have no difficulty in analogically extending its application beyond the relations of the family life to the wider relations of the life of mankind. So far, we are on ground of common experience, and are using words in their ordinary sense. When, however, we proceed to speak of the “Fatherhood of God” we are on no such ground. It is plain that in the expression “God the Father” we are not using the word “Father” in a definite physical or biological sense, but in a sense symbolic and figurative, just as it is in such a sense that in the Creed we speak of Jesus Christ as the “only-begotten Son.” By the phrase “Fatherhood of God” we make such an attempt as the

limitations of our minds allow to indicate what we conceive to be the relation existing between the Supreme Being and individual men and women. It is clear, therefore, that the word "Father," used in reference to God, has simply a subjective and relative value, and not an absolute and objective value—that it has the value of a spiritual symbol chosen to denote, analogically and figuratively, something which we find ourselves unable to directly conceive and express. It is plain, also, that the meaning of the word "Father," as applied to God, lies in the highest plane—what we have called the "supernatural" plane—of human experience, and that it expresses transcendent and coalescent powers of goodness, wisdom, and will, exercised in relation to man, and for his preservation and advantage.

Now, what we have already seen to be true of the general term "God," as a symbol of the Supreme Being, is also evidently true of the special term "Father"—that is to say, it is a term which it is, in theory, open to the human mind, if it pleases, to discard, even while it clings to what is essential in the conception which it represents. The word "Father" is primarily a biological term; it is secondarily a human, social, and moral term, denoting an assemblage and beneficent exercise of certain moral, intellectual, and practical powers. In relation to God, it denotes the union and manifestation of these powers in an infinite sense. It is evident, however, that such a union is not necessarily represented by the human and personal word "Father." It might conceivably be as well represented by the word "Mother." The word "Father," as a designation of the Deity, is, of course, raised out of its biological and sex limitations, and employed with a spiritual largeness which makes it expressive only of the highest, or "supernatural," qualities of both man and woman. So employed, it ceases to be a sex word, and becomes, of course, a symbol, denoting, as far as any human words have the capacity to do so, that representative personal image of transcendent and beneficent Goodness, Wisdom, and Power, which the human

mind, working upon the totality of its outer and inner experiences, forms for itself, and which it calls the Divine Nature, or God. And as the word "Father," in such a symbolic use of it, is raised above the limitations of the lower nature, and takes its colour from the nature of the Divine—a nature of transcendent, coalescent goodness, wisdom, and power—so the word "Mother" could be similarly raised, and we might, without any impropriety, speak of God the Mother, or of the Motherhood of God.

The exclusive use of the word "Father" as a designation of God has been doubtless due to various causes. The mind of man is subject to its own limitations. It cannot move in both the sex categories at once; and having to cast its conception of the Supreme Being into a human and personal form, it has been forced, of course—and this especially by the exigencies of exposition and worship—upon the choice of either the masculine nature or the feminine as a representation of the Divine. Its persisting, predominant choice of the masculine has, of course, been, to some extent, due to the fact that the mind of man, as distinguished from woman, has for the most part been the creative and controlling agent in religion; but, still more, to the obvious truth that man has actually been, throughout the history of the world, the immediate "Father" and Source, the Procreator and active Providence, of all our greater human possessions, material, intellectual, social, moral—pre-eminent in physical force, in the genius and revelation of spiritual things, in the foundation of religion, in the arts and sciences, in industry, in civil organization and policy, and in the energies and lordship of war. This representation of the Divine in forms of the masculine has not, as we all know, been absolute and universal. In the ancient polytheisms, Western and Eastern, the feminine aspect of Humanity entered largely into the conceptions of the gods; and in Catholicism, while the worship given to Our Lady and the female saints has throughout been subordinate to that accorded to the Supreme Being, still

the homage yielded to the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of God, a homage culminating in the dogma of her Immaculate Conception, shows that the Catholic spiritual genius—here, as elsewhere, in natural correspondence with the fullest and highest working of the human heart—has instinctively sought to associate woman with that image of a complete and perfect personal Humanity which is, for the mind of man, the only possible representation of the Divine. It is, perhaps, only in Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Protestantism that she has been entirely excluded from it. Nevertheless, the truth remains that the ultimate, all-comprehending word in Catholicism, as in other religions, has been the word “God,” and that this word, again, has found its final definition, in terms of Humanity, in the conception of God the Father.

When, however, we once recognize that this word, employed in such a connection, is employed, not absolutely,

Sanctity of
Traditional
Terminology. as a biological or human term, but figuratively, and as expressive of transcendent or supernatural perfection—a perfection abstract and unseen, but given as an ideal, and in spiritual vision—then we also recognize that there is, in principle, nothing to prevent us from substituting the word “Mother” for the word “Father” as a symbol of God, assigning to the word “Mother,” so used, the ideal completeness and purity which we have hitherto in the same relation attached to the word “Father.” There is, of course, not the slightest probability that such a substitution will ever take place. There is no need for it. It is against reason. It is contrary to the mind of Humanity. The instinct of Humanity in its conception of God as the Father—a Father transcendent in all perfection, and reconciling in Himself, therefore, the tender purity of maternal love with the providential wisdom and will of man—this instinct has been sure and high, and has, as we have said, rested on a basis of universal experience. A word so chosen and so used comes to us with an inalienable consecration, which will be naturally

proof against a metaphysical and revolutionary analysis. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that as in the term "God," so in the term "Father," there is no inherent and final necessity—apart from the potent force of use and tradition—as an expression of the Supreme Being, and that, given the preservation of the idea itself, the term "Mother" might serve to symbolically denote it. It is important to recognize this, because it throws light on that truth which it is our special object at present to reinforce—the truth that the language of Catholicism, whether in the New Testament, in the Creeds, in the liturgy, in the definitions of Councils, or in the expositions of theologians, is, so far as its central conceptions are concerned, uniformly symbolic and suggestive, instead of being, as it is sometimes supposed to be, direct and definite. The substitution of the idea of the Mother for the idea of the Father in our mental representations of the Deity—a substitution which, in itself, as we have seen, is, in the abstract, conceivable and possible—would, of course, have a large effect of disruption and confusion upon our historic religious phraseology, and, by consequence, upon the co-ordination of feelings and thoughts which it both facilitates and represents.

It would, for example, palpably have such an effect upon the language ascribed to Our Lord in the New Testament, where He has brought into luminous and beautiful relief the image of God as "the Father." It would, again, dislocate the form and terminology of the doctrine of the Trinity, which, superficially at least, seems to depend upon its masculine symbolism, and especially upon the maintenance of such distinctions as that between the Father and the Son. It would, in the same way, bring a complete verbal disturbance upon the structure and statements of our three great Creeds, in which the logical coherence, or, indeed, the doctrinal significance, might seem, to many minds, to be hopelessly subverted by the mere substitution of feminine and maternal symbols for symbols masculine

and paternal. It is not here necessary to work out the full consequences of such a substitution. They must be obvious to anyone who considers the vocabulary of Catholicism, in Scripture, worship, doctrine, exposition, or literature, from its earliest ages to the present day. The hypothesis of a change in our symbolic conceptions and representations of Deity, from the male sex to the female, from the paternal to the maternal, from the son to the daughter, from the masculine pronoun he to the feminine pronoun she—such a hypothesis cannot be said to be in itself necessarily irreligious, since all the conceivable attributes of the Divine nature are common, in varying degree, to man and woman ; and yet, if we could imagine such an absurd and revolutionary disturbance as taking place, it would involve a total recasting of the conceptions and language of Christianity, from the time of Our Lord and Our Lady—to whom we do no dishonour by giving to them titles derived from our historic class relations—down to the present age.

The conclusion to be drawn from this is certainly not that such a change as we have supposed is possible or desirable ; and still less is it that the verbal symbols of Catholicism are without a real and eternal significance. The conclusion to be drawn is, first, that words are not things, and that man and woman, in the highest spiritual planes, are one sex, or of no sex ; secondly, that, because human thought and speech fall, by the constitution of man's mind, inevitably into definite categories, and are conditioned by the sum of his constant experiences, therefore, in the symbolic conceptions and representations of the Divine nature, he is necessarily governed by his sense of what is actually and visibly highest in the life of Humanity. It follows, consequently, that our Creeds are wrongly used when they are used doctrinally and analytically as tests of belief, but are rightly used when they are used poetically and figuratively as symbols of things believed. It follows, also, that the proposals which are occasionally made to bring about some subordinate alterations in them, in order to accommo-

date them to the modern mind, rest upon a misconception both of the character of the Creeds themselves, and of the attitude of the modern mind towards them. The modern mind does not call for some minor verbal changes in such documents as the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. From the point of view of a mere objective analysis, no verbal changes that could be made in them would render them convincing to the critical reason, however satisfactory they might thus become to a latitudinarian Protestantism. The modern mind only wishes to have it recognized that these great constructions of the human spirit are, what they are, synthetic symbols of man's ideas, feelings, hopes, fears, imaginations, desires, concerning that which, in its totality, is properly inexpressible, incomprehensible, unimaginable, and immeasurable—the eternal and omnipresent nature of God, as it is unfolded to man progressively, by the continuous enlargement of his experiences, outer and inner, within that Infinite Order of things, visible and invisible, lower and higher, material and vital, animal and human, social and moral, in which he lives and moves and has his being, and of which he is himself a conscious part.

CHAPTER XV

ON THE TRINITY

FROM such a point of view—recognizing the distinction between words and things; between representative conceptions and direct perceptions; between types and symbols, inevitably stamped with the limitations of individual beings, and the Infinite Reality which they denote; between the subjective and the objective; between the abstract and the concrete; between the visible and the invisible; between the fact as it is presented to us by external observation, and the same fact as it lives exalted and transfigured in the human spirit—from this point of view it is possible for the modern mind to so present the doctrine of the Trinity to itself that it ceases to be—what to some it certainly is—a mere blank mystery, or a formula of apparent paradoxes, and becomes a symbolic representation of real experience, gathering within its central comprehensiveness the whole outer and inner life of man. Over the doctrine of the Trinity the modern mind—always understanding by that mind, not the revolutionary reason, but the mind of a developed Humanity, entering into, and continuing, the things of Catholicism—has, as we say, a natural lordship. It exercises in regard to it the rights of explanation and the authority of fulfilment. In that doctrine, as in all the great symbols of Catholicism, it recognizes itself, as the mature man is able to recognize himself in the language and conduct of the child upon whom he looks back, and out of whom he has grown. The age in which Christ came, the ages in which

the consciousness and power of His Spirit began first to work in Humanity, and to express themselves in formal creeds—this, as we have already seen, is not a dead time, passed, as an archaism, out of the life of man, so that its meanings have ceased to have a meaning, and its religious speech has become unintelligible. Man is always at home in his own mind, in all the ages. He sees, as he looks back upon the period in which the chief Catholic ideas were shaped into an order, that in all the greater essentials there was the same external universe, playing upon the human soul, and the same human soul in correspondence with it, as those which to-day furnish to objective science its vast double domain.

The two halves of that domain—man and the universe external to man—represent, from one point of view, an eternal dualism, since man cannot at once be himself and other than himself, cannot at the same time feel and not feel, think and not think, act and not act, and play the part of ultimate and unconscious atoms while he regally exercises his discernment upon them, and determines in his soul the composition and decomposition of worlds. From another point of view, however—the point of view of the continuing and interpretative mind of Humanity, constant and yet progressive, critical and yet synthetic, conscious of what is external, and conscious also of its own consciousness—these two domains, with all their categories, become a single Indivisible Order, Universal, Infinite, Incomprehensible; an Immeasurable Fact, an Insoluble Mystery; known, but not understood; the source of all experience, yet transcending all experience; an Eternal Object, an Eternal Subject; distinct from man, yet contained in man, as man is likewise contained in it; holding all thinkable things in an unthinkable complex; and gathering into an endless, awful unity unnumbered systems of worlds, and the Space in which they move, and the heavens above, and the earth beneath, and the waters over the earth, and all inanimate and animate beings, and man, their master and

judge, and the myriads of human souls, the dead and the living, linked in an unbroken community, and man's mind itself, the ample theatre of this stupendous spectacle, in which the things of perception, and the things of memory, and the things of imagination, and the things of hope, and the things of goodness, beauty, truth, love, will, sin, sorrow, and joy, encounter one another in a ceaseless conflict, governed by a dream of peace.

To this Universal, Infinite Unity Man, the Namer—in the exercise of that magisterial office which is so profoundly and beautifully ascribed to him in the Book of Genesis—gives a designation. He calls it God.

Symbol of
the Trinity.

For man nothing less than the Whole can be God, and to man nothing more than the Whole is conceivable—in so far as we are entitled to say that that is a Whole and is conceivable which is plainly illimitable and transcendent; which, in Shakespeare's words, gives to us "thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls"; and of which we cannot even imagine ourselves as ever gaining a measure. Upon this Infinite Whole—which is in him, and in which he is, and which is God—man may look, as he looks upon any part of it, with a double eye. First, he may look upon it with the eye of objective science, discerning and measuring measurable relations, ascertaining forces, determining categories, and constructing a scale of existences and phenomena, from the lowest physical things of outward nature to the highest spiritual things of the inward mind. So looking, and so interpreting, man is a theologian, building up the synthetic science of God, in so far as this can be done, out of the special sciences of partial beings, and ordering the various sciences of all lower natures in reference to the supreme science of the "supernatural"—the presidential science of morals.

Secondly, man may look upon this Infinite Whole, not with the eye of a theologian, whose essential office it is to discover truths and laws, and shape them into an ordered doctrine, but with the eye of a religious being. A religious

being is a being who worships and prays, with a worship and prayer which pass into life. In religion worship is what is central and distinctive. The doctrine of religion may exist apart, as science or philosophy; the discipline of religion may exist apart, as morality. It is only in the synthesis of worship—in which truth passes into life, through the unifying force of feeling, imagination, and will, acting by the medium of prayer and the sacraments—that the essential character of religion is plainly exhibited. Looking in worship, and with the eye of the soul, upon the Being of God—which is one Being with the Infinite Order analytically interrogated and interpreted by science—man represents that Being to himself according to the constitution and needs of his mind, and moved by spiritual love and purpose, in forms of personal Humanity, as God the Father, the eternal Source and Providence of his life.

He does this largely by a spontaneous impulse, but what he does in feeling is yet in accord with reason. It is plainly and incontestably true that every human soul born into the world is born subject to an assemblage and order of powers which are still but a single Power—an Indivisible Infinite Whole—which contains, and is represented by, and passes into, the life of Humanity, at once its noblest constituent and its completest expression. From this Power the individual man derives his life. By this Power he is nourished and sustained. Against this Power he can do nothing. In co-operation with this Power, he can do almost everything. By means of this Power, and not otherwise, he grows in feeling, reason, will, and force. From it, in the unity of its endless working, flow into his being vitality, consciousness, intelligence, judgment, will, the sense and choice of right, the knowledge and rejection of wrong, the feeling and capacity for the beautiful, the discernment of truth, the force of self-command and self-direction, the vision of an attractive, transcendent, inexorable Perfection, ever presenting itself, and ever more fully presenting itself, as an ideal, unified, personal

Humanity, a supernatural and Divine Excellence, chosen and named as the Supreme Good, and containing within itself, and representing, all natures lower than its own. It is not an extravagance of poetic imagination, it is a plain prose truth of science and common sense, that an infant coming into the world to-morrow would be, but for the action upon it of this saving and exalting Power, as seed sown by the wayside, and that it will, exactly in proportion as this Omnipresent Providence quickens and raises it, bringing it into willing and intelligent correspondence with itself, be raised in the scale of being and sensibility until not "beauty, born of murmuring sound" alone, but all the glory of nature, and all the conquests of man, and the whole moving harmony of the procession of worlds, and the stars in their courses, and the souls of the wise and righteous, breathing forth the Spirit of God, pass into its life, to order and transform it.

The religious soul, therefore, when, moved by the spirit of worship, it conceives of this Omnipresent Providence as

The Trinity
in Worship.

God the Father, Supreme in Love, Wisdom, and Power, is only representing to itself, in a single symbolic personal image, the Universal Order, visible and invisible, on which it depends, from which everything actually proceeds to it, and in submissive, active co-operation with which it lives. It is in relation to this Supreme Father, thus conceived, that men, in the language of St. Paul, are "sons of God" and "co-heirs with Christ," and that Christ, the representative of an ideal and perfect Humanity, is His Son in a pre-eminent and transcendent sense, being both God and Man. In natural dependence upon these two conceptions—"proceeding" from them, as the Nicene Creed so rightly expresses it—is the conception of the Holy Spirit—the sense and power of Divine Wisdom or Truth working as an illuminating and inspiring Presence in the minds and hearts of men. These three Powers of the Divine Being are properly, in the right reason of worship, represented as

Three in One, just as, in the right reason of science, the different orders of nature are properly represented as distinct, and as working each according to its special laws, and yet as all being bound up in the Universal Order, and as working thus as an indivisible Unity or Whole.

We cannot study the human mind without seeing that what appear to be contradictions and paradoxes are so far from being uncongenial to it that they are native to it, and sit easily upon it. Those who have subjected the doctrine of the Trinity to a minute objective analysis, and have then dismissed it as being contrary to reason, have themselves been contrary to reason—the sovereign reason of Humanity—in not allowing sufficiently for spontaneous, poetic rationality, and in not recognizing how the human mind, in the immensity of its conflicting experiences—seeing first one side of truth and then the other, and seeking in some way to relate them—naturally and readily employs what we may call processes of contradiction and paradox. When Wordsworth says, “The child is father of the man”; when Tennyson says,

“ Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is ”;

when Auguste Comte says that “the individual does not exist,” and that yet, without individuals, there could be no Humanity; when it is said of any given man that he was admirable as a son, as a husband, and as a father, meaning that each of these personal functions is distinct, and yet that into each of them he poured the full force of an integral personality; when we see represented by the celebrant at the Altar at once the Victim Who is sacrificed, the priest who sacrifices, and the worshipper for whom the Sacrifice is offered—when ideas such as these are brought before us, we can understand, what alone in this connection we are concerned to understand, how the human mind, trying to reconcile in a single

transcendent personal image the coalescent powers of God, represents Him to itself as a Triune Deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Divine in Power, Divine in Love, Divine in Wisdom, Who expresses Himself as a distinct but complete Being, or Person, in each of these distinct operations of His undivided nature. Nothing is more certain than that the doctrine of the Trinity, instead of being, as it is sometimes supposed to be, a direct challenge to the reason of man, is in consonance with evident tendencies and manifestations of his mind in many fields of thought and expression, and is, in fact, a symbolic and coherent representation, in terms of the characteristic and related attributes of Humanity, of that Infinite, Incomprehensible Being of God—identical, in its visible manifestation, with the Universal Order of science—which, in the absence of such symbolic expressions, could, within the limits of man's intelligence, find no representation at all.

CHAPTER XVI

SPIRITUAL REALITY

THE relation of the modern mind to the doctrine of the Trinity—always understood by the modern mind, once more, not the revolutionary reason, but the mind of a developed and progressive Humanity, affirming and elucidating the things of Catholicism—may be taken as a capital and representative instance of its general relation to Catholic dogmas and symbols. That relation may be said summarily to be governed by the following principles: First, that in those dogmas and symbols, and this in proportion to their universality and persistence, there is a positive content of demonstrable and useful truth, which has a high permanent value, and of which, therefore, for religious purposes, these symbols ought naturally to remain as the right expression; secondly, that it is the office of the modern mind—fortified, on the one side, by the spiritual culture of Catholicism, fortified, on the other, by the moral, intellectual, and practical acquisitions of the last six centuries—to determine the nature and effect of this positive content, and its place in a complete synthesis of human conceptions. We may apply to the dogmas and symbols of Catholicism, in fact, the principle which Newman so justly brought to bear on the Articles of the Anglican Church. If there is some discoverable original sense of those dogmas and symbols which was only proper to the ages which gave them forth, then with that sense we have no other than a merely historic concern—the same sort of concern as we have with the

beliefs of the Greeks in regard to Zeus and Aphrodite, or as we have with the pre-Copernican cosmogony. Such a sense must be regarded as local and provisional only, and if we could suppose the Creeds of Catholicism to contain no sense other than this, then, undoubtedly, sooner or later, they would cease to have a meaning for the human mind.

Let us, for example, suppose that when the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds were composed the belief of the highest minds of the Church was, literally and absolutely, that God was actually a sort of transcendent human Person of the male sex, seated on a throne in the sky, with the Son, as another transcendent human Person, on His right hand, and the Holy Spirit, as a third such Person, on His left, these three distinct Persons, nevertheless, being doctrinally, if not imaginatively, represented as mysteriously coalescent and One. Let us suppose, further, that to these minds Heaven was really a definite cosmic or sidereal region, beyond the limits of the visible universe, and Hell a place of fire and flame, situated, perhaps, in the bowels of the earth. Let us suppose that when they said of Our Lord that He "came down" from Heaven, and that He afterwards "ascended" there, they had the same ideas of "up" and "down" in this connection as we attach to these words in ordinary usage. Let us, again, suppose that they pictured to themselves Christ's Resurrection as a purely physical event, and His Ascension into Heaven as the actual rising of a body into the sky. Let us, lastly, suppose that by "the resurrection of the dead" they meant a similar "rising" of the bodies of all mankind.

Now, if we could assume that it was some such sense as this, and this sense alone, that was put into the symbols of Catholicism—the sense, as we may call it, of Antiquity and Catholicism. a literal and infantile materialism—then we should have to conclude that those symbols might conceivably have had a meaning for their own age, but can have no religious meaning for ours. Upon this subject argument is unnecessary. What Newman says of

the mind of the individual man is still more true of the mind of Humanity: "For myself it was not logic that carried me on; as well might one say that the quicksilver in the barometer changes the weather. It is the concrete being that reasons; pass a number of years, and I find my mind in a new place; how? the whole man moves." This is exactly what happens with the mind of Humanity—that one Man, always living and always learning, of whom Pascal speaks. It finds itself, as one age succeeds to another, "in a new place." Therefore, our concern in regard to the symbols and dogmas of Catholicism—as Newman's concern in regard to the Articles of the Anglican Church—is not with any local and individual meaning that their authors may have put into them, but with their Catholic meaning. Their Catholic meaning is Catholic not only in space, but in time. It is not only contemporaneously, but continuously universal. It is not a meaning for Antiquity alone, but for the Middle Age and the Modern. It has the sure sign of a persisting and developing life.

That is one reason, amongst others, why the Protestant and critical appeal to Antiquity, as against Catholicism, has been so mistaken and futile. It is to no purpose to show that a certain belief was held, or was not held, in the first three centuries of Christianity, unless we can also show that it has been held, or has not been held, since. We may say plainly and bluntly, and without any want of reverence, that what the Christians of the first three centuries believed is of no importance whatever, except in so far as it has passed, as a living constituent, into the developing mind of Catholicism, since what belongs to Antiquity only—as, for example, the belief of the early Christians concerning the Second Coming of Christ—is antiquated, just as what belongs to the Middle Ages only is medieval. In the same way, of course, we have to ask, not merely what was affirmed at the Councils of Nice or of Trent, but how far what was affirmed at those Councils has since actually

been living in the religious mind of Humanity. If it has not visibly so lived, the mere fact that it has been registered in the decrees of Councils has only a small importance.

It is this consideration which makes the common use of the word "orthodox" so misleading and unhelpful. What is "orthodox" may represent, as a Parliamentary statute so often represents, not something that is widely and progressively operative in the life of the world, but an affirmation of opinion which, relatively to the movement of the human mind, is dead. The Greek Church is technically the "Orthodox Church," but it is a Church which, although it has apparently had possession of the common content of Christianity, has yet, because it has been mainly the Church of Eastern peoples, not been the Church of a progressive Humanity, working largely and variously in the highest plane of its development. The Western Church is the Catholic Church because the Western mind is universal—universal in its powers and acquisitions, in its vicarious and representative character, in the variety and fulness of its evolution in every sphere of life and culture. Therefore, when we say that the only sense of the dogmas and symbols of Catholicism with which we are now concerned is their Catholic sense, we mean that sense which, having been given in Antiquity, has accompanied the enlarging Western mind in its onward movement, gaining expansion, a higher significance, a larger elucidation, a fuller life, from its place in the total body of human culture. And this sense it is for the modern Catholic mind, in the full play of its consciousness and powers—and for nothing lower or narrower than that mind—to progressively determine. There has been, and there still is, much speculation as to the meaning of Truth. Of Truth we may certainly say this—that if it ever is, it cannot permanently remain, the isolated discovery and declaration of a single separate mind, or of a single separate body of men, or of a single separate age. Truth, in whatever order of human ex-

perience, is ultimately Catholic. By truth, therefore, we must broadly mean the universal, constant, progressive, and tested affirmations of Humanity in the various planes, lower and higher, of knowledge and use.

The modern mind—in other and better words, as we may now say, the Catholic mind—determining the Catholic sense of Catholic dogmas and symbols, looks for their meaning, in accordance with that sure principle on which we have all along insisted, in the mind of Humanity itself. The mind of Humanity, in ever-enlarging relation with the external universe, and with its own ever-enlarging sensibilities and conceptions, as begotten in that relation, is the illimitable, shadowy sphere of truth—the truth of goodness, beauty, knowledge, will, and power. It is the chosen sanctuary of the Supernatural—of that highest nature, the nature of the Perfect and Divine, which rests, in sovereign discernment, upon all lower natures, assigning to each its place and bounds. In the mind of Humanity, working, by processes of transformation and transfiguration, upon the whole content of its experience, outer and inner, God has His throne. There Heaven is. There Hell is. There Purgatory is. There is Judgment. There is condemnation. There is salvation. There are Christ and the Blessed Virgin. There is life. There is death. There is Resurrection. We do not need a modern philosopher, discoursing analytically on the objective and subjective, to give us this doctrine. It was given to men, in words of perennial power and beauty, by Him Who, according to the Gospel records, taught His disciples to look not without but within for the things of religion. But it has been given also by the whole history of Catholicism, which has not been a history of outward things alone, but a history of inward things, passing into outward form and manifestation. Catholicism has been a great Sacramental Fact, resting on the Word made Flesh.

The mind of Humanity, holding within its comprehensive-

ness the things of Catholicism, and giving to them their meaning and force, is, therefore, the region of the highest reality. We cannot say that by the real and the positive we mean only the things of earth and water and air and flesh and blood, as these things are represented by science. The universal and sovereign realities are in the spirit. We cannot say that a river, or a mountain, or the sun, or the starry heavens, are realities, and that, for example, Socrates and St. Francis of Assisi, as they have lived and worked in the ages, have not been a reality. We cannot say, either, that Socrates in Athens and St. Francis in Umbria were real, but that they have never been real since. It is, on the contrary, true that the range of their spiritual vitality has been greater in the centuries that separate us from what we are accustomed to call their death than it ever was, or could be, during their life. We cannot, similarly, say that an inconceivably distant star, such as Vega—undiscernible except with a telescope—is a reality, but that the Blessed Virgin is not real. The Blessed Virgin is a star—not of the sea, as she is sometimes called in Catholic hymns, but of the human soul. She is an image, not material and external, but spiritual and internal—a beautiful and ineffable Presence of purity and blameless love, throned in the religious heart as the Mother of God, and as so utterly and completely vestal that we have been forced, by the processes of an instinctive and holy logic, to represent her to ourselves as herself conceived without stain of defiling passion for the dignity of her transcendent office.

This star of the human soul, like some celestial luminaries, was, as we know—and as the Epistles of the New Testament are sufficient to show us—for a long time not fully recognized. The homage rendered to Our Lady only gradually grew in authority and completeness. That, however, is not, as Protestantism has supposed, an argument against its truth and value. The fact that it so grew and established itself—developing, as it did, spontaneously and continuously—is a proof that it was in correspondence with a

permanent and deep need of man's spiritual nature, and that in the image of the Blessed Virgin, therefore, men have instinctively seen the sign of a beneficent Reality. When we approach that image in yearning and hope—whether as it rises before us in the mind, visible only to the spiritual eye, or as it finds an external embodiment in forms of art—we understand fully in feeling, what we may analytically and less adequately understand by a process of reasoning, that it gathers together, co-ordinates, unifies, and conveys to us, truths, powers, experiences, ideals, longings, and blessings, inherent in that highest, or supernatural, being of Humanity which is one with the Being of God. Here, as elsewhere in Catholicism, we know before we explain, and we know much more than we explain. Faith first gives us possession of things of which reason afterwards unfolds the nature. The image of the Blessed Virgin which becomes present to our minds is not an illusion. We do not invent it. It is living above us in the highest Heaven—that is to say, in the universal, continuous, mind of a spiritual and Catholic Humanity. In so far as we gain the power of rising out of our personal imperfections and limitations, and of ascending to these spiritual heights, we gain the power of entering into communion with Our Lady—or, in other words, with that blessed, holy life of a spiritual Humanity which she typifies and represents, and which, for so many centuries, she has brought into the hearts of men and women.

Into that life, into its power, into its beneficence, we enter much more surely—with a fuller and higher happiness—when we offer up a prayer to the Blessed Virgin than when we study a treatise on ethics, or even when we read the story of some good man or woman, beautiful and inspiring as such a record may be. The reason of this is plain. The religious human heart, as it is shown to us in history—and history is our ultimate witness for what the religious human heart needs and demands—requires, in that pursuit of a supreme spiritual good which expresses

itself in worship, a personal image which yet embodies a perfection such as in no actual person is ever realized—an image, therefore, which we rightly call transcendent and supernatural, and which—to take an illustration from another field of thought—is as

“The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet’s dream,”

of which Wordsworth speaks. We may say, if we will, that religious worship is a thing of the past, and that atheism is the thing of the future; but if man is to continue to worship, these two truths come to us with the warrant of an incontestable experience—first, that he will continue to worship a Perfection such as he has never in himself realized, but has yet always pursued; secondly, that this Perfection will present itself to him as a human and personal, yet transcendent and spiritual, image, maintaining an attractive, governing constancy amidst all the failures and deviations of his actual life.

To these two truths we have a remarkable witness in the work of Auguste Comte—that work which, as we have already seen, is of such signal significance in its bearing on the attitude towards Catholicism of the modern revolutionary mind when it tries to escape from the revolution, and turns again to religion. For our immediate purpose, the special importance of his work consists in this—that, having, as he supposed, and this on a scientific principle, rejected all ideas of God and Christ, he proceeded to construct a “positive” or atheistic religion, with Humanity as its Supreme Being. This Supreme Being was, as he said, social or collective; but when he came to shape his scheme of worship, he found himself under the necessity of deciding that it should be represented in a personal form, as a Woman with her Child in her arms. Further, he held that this Woman ought to be conceived of as a “Virgin Mother,” and that, as such, she should be taken as a type not only of the “Great

Comte and
the Virgin
Mother.

Being," but also of a sort of ideal of human generation, to be accomplished, without the congress of the sexes, by processes of nervous reaction in woman herself. This "utopia," as Comte calls it—half-religious, half-biological, and wholly miraculous—he proposed as an ideal limit of human perfection; and he insists upon the principle that if we could suppose this particular limit to be reached, it would be necessary to construct another utopia to take its place, so essential is it to the religious life that man should put before himself what, in these pages, we have so frequently called a "supernatural" end—an end of Perfection never actually reached, but always to be pursued, as an inspiring and exalting aim. Comte's conceptions, in this relation, are important chiefly as showing how men's minds, even when working under revolutionary conditions, and avowedly on an atheistic principle, are yet, when they once enter the field of worship, carried back to the same truths as have always governed the religious mind of Humanity. The ideal expressed in his sex utopia is, of course, so far from being new that it is visibly at work in the first ages of Christianity, and is, indeed, stamped broadly upon non-Christian faiths; while in his symbol of the Virgin Mother he was only asking men to accept from him, *de novo*, as a contrivance of his personal genius, what they had already, in substance, accepted, for more than a thousand years, from the genius of the Catholic Church.

We see, then, that Catholicism is a representation of high spiritual realities of the mind of Humanity—realities which that mind objectively and symbolically denotes by images drawn from external experience—as when it seats Heaven "above us" in the sky, or places Hell "beneath us" in the depths of the earth, and then, these two points being determined, speaks of "descent" and "ascent" in relation to them. Ultimately, therefore, Catholicism rests upon the whole body of man's enlarging experience, outer and inner—his experience of that Ruling, Infinite, Incom-

The Modern
Mind and
Spiritual
Reality.

prehensible, and Universal Order, visible and invisible, of which the word "God" is the final religious expression. That Order, however—an Order which necessarily presents itself to us as of illimitable completeness, and therefore as of ideal Perfection—never, in a single instance, reaches the individual mind directly, but always through the mind of Humanity, where it is represented either in verbal symbols, or in the categories of objective science, or in the processes and creations of the arts, or in the images and conceptions of worship. Consequently, when the revolutionary mind, trying to escape from the revolution and to re-enter the sphere of religion, sets itself in opposition to the religious mind of Humanity, and attempts to bring in some artificial image or conception of the Supreme Being, it inevitably produces something which has the air of a vain and fantastic invention, and, high as may be its aim, loses and bewilders itself in its endeavour to give effect to it. The right office of the modern mind in relation to the great dogmas and symbols of Catholicism—which are properly its own, because they are dogmas and symbols of the continuing religious mind of Humanity—is not to reject them, but, maintaining and guarding them, to give them an ever fuller security and power by interpreting them in the light of the world's advancing culture. It is an office of faith and reason, of order and progress, of preservation and development. It is the natural office of a true Catholicism.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRIST IN THE MODERN MIND

THE image of the Blessed Virgin, living on the heights in the religious mind of Humanity, and so, in proportion as they ascend to these heights, coming into the souls of men and women, is, then, one of the chief channels through which God, the Supreme and Universal Source of life and perfection, has penetrated their lives to sustain and raise them. But the Blessed Virgin is only such an image, and only exercises such a power, because she is the Mother of God—because she presents her Son to us, and because that Son is, by one of those principles of paradox and contradiction which sit so easily upon the human spirit, the origin and author of her own dignity.

“O Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son,” says the great poetic voice of Catholicism in his famous and beautiful invocation to Our Lady—thus, in a single bold, eternal line, throwing into luminous relief the truth on which the worship accorded to her has ultimately rested. This truth is the truth of the Crucifix. It is this image, and no other, which is the central symbol of Catholicism, holding within its severe simplicity that large, life-giving principle of man’s spiritual being and power, in the affirmation of which, in all its dogmas and in all its institutions, the Catholic Church is truly *semper eadem*. Concerning this image—in other words, concerning Jesus Christ, and His place in His own realm, in Christendom—the revolutionary mind has, as we know, become the victim of a vast

confusion. For that confusion those who are involved in it cannot individually be held responsible. In its movement from a lower plane of apprehension and power to a higher it seems to have been impossible for Humanity, hitherto, to avoid a season of unrest and conflict, in which an old authoritative conception or method has struggled to maintain itself against the force and claims of a new. Instances of this, of course, have been innumerable in the arts, in the sciences, in the shaping of social life, and in the organization of industrial action. Eventually, however, in each of these spheres, the existing order of ideas and powers, in so far as it was really solid, has maintained itself, enriched and developed by the very forces which appeared at first to be arrayed against it.

The same thing, we may be sure, will eventually prove true of what seems to be the attack directed against the Catholic spiritual order by the forces of the religious revolution. We have defined atheism as the rejection of God in Christ—Christ being the principle and centre of the Catholic Order. Men, however—allowing for exceptions which, numerous and important as they may be, have no real bearing on what we are now saying—do not reject the Catholic spiritual order, and Christ as its foundation, simply from the working of moral perversity. In every revolution, spiritual or temporal, there are men involved who are properly described as revolutionaries, who bring discredit upon its causes, who are unaffectedly glad to be rid of the restraints of law and discipline, and whose tendency is to indefinitely prolong a disorder in which they find for themselves freedom and ease. It is not from such men, considerable as their number has been, that the modern religious revolution has gained meaning and force, any more than it is the large body of the bigoted, the indifferent, or the immoral who have always had a place in the Christian world, that have given meaning and force to the Catholic spiritual order.

The men who have really lent character and sanction

to the religious revolution have been men who, by their temper or powers, have been in natural affinity with a spiritual Catholicism, and who, in an earlier age, would perhaps have been ranked amongst its priests or doctors. They have been carried into the revolution, first, because of an inevitable and almost unconscious enlargement of mind and culture, in which the traditional conceptions of Catholicism seemed to them to have lost truth and value; secondly, because of their inability to see how the new mind of Humanity proceeded from the old, and was, in fact, only the old passing into a fuller discernment and realization of itself; thirdly, because the ruling authorities of Catholicism, obeying a natural and just but uninstructed conservatism, and seeing only in modern thought its obtrusive energies of analysis and subversion, have, by a policy of absolute opposition to an irreversible movement, thrown its representatives out of the Church. Having thus been cast into the revolution, such men have, for the most part—by a law of nature which is also a law of human nature—tended to remain in it, to justify it, and perhaps even to develop it, thus widening the gulf between themselves and the order of faith and settlement of which they once formed part. It cannot be said that this state of things—a state in which, on the one hand, order is imperilled by sheer resistance to progress, and, on the other, progress is compromised by a revolutionary rejection of order—has yet come to an end. Nevertheless there are many signs that there are now at work forces of reparation and reconciliation which, in their ultimate effect, will end the antagonism between past and present, and convert what we call the modern movement into a true continuance and development of Catholicism.

The central controlling point of the Catholic spiritual order, and therefore of any movement for the preservation and development of that order, is, as we have
 Mystery. said, the image of the Crucified Christ—that image to which we are naturally led by the image of the Blessed Virgin, as, of course, in so many other modes and

ways. Christ upon the Cross—that is Catholicism. “I preach Christ, and Him crucified,” says St. Paul. The human mind, which—for the confutation of the mere logician—delights in paradoxes and apparent contradictions, has, in Catholicism, reconciled the natures of God and Man, and represented Omnipotence to itself as subjected to the death of a criminal. In a certain sense the idea of the Incarnation may be said to embrace the whole meaning of the life and death of Our Lord. It is true that the most insignificant of objects is, in its way, a witness to God. God, the Universal, Infinite Order of all things, is a mystery—not less a mystery, but ever more a mystery, in this age of sure and developed science than in the ages when science, in our modern sense of the word, was, to the vast majority of men, unknown. The word “mystery,” like all other words of man, has its meaning given to it by the human mind. It denotes, not the external relations of things, which may be exactly determinable and measurable, but the way in which those things affect us.

“Two things strike me dumb,” said Kant—“the starry heavens, and the sense of moral responsibility in man,” while Herbert Spencer confessed that he had to withdraw his mind from the thought of infinite space, as too awful a subject for meditation. These are mysteries of the transcendent kind; but a worm, as we watch it creeping across the road, is also a mystery, although a mystery so familiar that we seldom, perhaps, arrest ourselves to regard it in this light. We are encompassed about by mystery, look where we will; and science, which measures the measurable relations of things, is so far from abolishing it that it is always extending its range. By a mystery, therefore, we do not mean something which has no relation whatever to sense or reason, but something which, having such a relation, yet excites in us a feeling of awe, or of wonder, or of the inexplicable.

The various events connected with the life of Christ are by the Catholic Church—as, for instance, in the Rosary—called “mysteries.” By this, however, is not meant that

they are simply inconceivable or unintelligible—that they represent to the human mind a mere blank negation of sensible things. The contrary is the case. The whole

The Nature
of Christ
Crucified.

meaning of the Incarnation resolves itself into this—that in Jesus Christ God became Man, or Humanity; that the Universal, Infinite, Incomprehensible Order of things, visible and invisible, natural and supernatural, summed itself up and expressed itself, not merely in a human and personal form, but in such a form as should ever afterwards identify the Divine nature with the spiritual subjugation and rule of the flesh, and with a self-sacrificing, beneficent love of man, directed by illuminating Wisdom to his redemption from sin and evil, and his exaltation to the highest good. That is what the Crucifix represents. Christ, in Whom the Word, or abstract Idea, of God was thus made flesh, is therefore rightly conceived of, relatively to the Universal Order, as the Son of God, relatively to Humanity as the Son of Man, and, at the same time, as Himself God. We are all “sons of God and co-heirs with Christ,” brethren of the Lord. Christ, however, is the one Son of God Who is Himself Divine—the “only-begotten of the Father”—that one Son of many sons Who has gathered together in a supreme, transcendent Type the qualities and powers of a Perfect Personal Spiritual Humanity, representing, ordering, transfiguring, and consecrating all the lower natures made subject to His supernatural being.

When we speak of the Divine Nature and the Human Nature as being distinct, and as yet united and reconciled in Christ, it is clear that we cannot look upon these two natures as incompatible, or consider the word “human” as having an assignable positive meaning, of which the word “Divine” is a mere negation. The modern mind—Catholic with the Catholicism of a culminating culture and development, and insisting on a meaning for religious terms such as may link them to life—will not be satisfied with mere illusory verbal distinctions. The Divine cannot be religiously conceived of simply as that which is not

human. Such a conception would be irreconcilable with the principle that "God made man in His own image." Contradictories exclude one another. The human, in varying degree, contains and represents the Divine—the Divine, or supernatural, positively considered, being in man that highest spiritual nature which rules and directs the various lower natures, social, animal, vegetable, physical, that enter into him, and makes them all subservient to its purposes. When, therefore, we say of Christ that He reconciles in Himself the human and the Divine, we mean that, having the ordinary physical attributes and needs of man, He also, in a signal and transcendent sense, represents that sovereign spiritual nature of discernment and choice by which all lower natures and needs, of whatever kind, are made auxiliary to the ends of Perfection.

Since the Advent of Christ, consequently, God, in Catholicism, has meant for man a Perfect Personal, apparent Humanity, containing within itself, representing, and ordering into a spiritual harmony, the constituent powers of the Infinite Order of things, visible and invisible. That is the Incarnation. It has sometimes been urged against the full and typical Humanity of Christ that He does not directly represent man in his various intellectual and social relations—that He is not, in the ordinary sense of these words, an artist, philosopher, or scientific thinker, a husband, father, citizen, or ruler. This objection rests on a misconception. When we recognize in Christ the Divine Humanity, we see in Him, not the representative of particular human offices or relations, or of any mere aggregate of such offices and relations, but, what is of infinitely more importance, the visible ideal type, or incarnation, of that visible power which alone in man is Divine—the power of a conscious spiritual lordship over himself, by which he directs all modes and exercises of his being, moral, intellectual, or practical, to a high end, foreseen and chosen, and brings them, in degree, into accord with it. We have, and can have, no other conception of the

Divine than that of a sovereign spiritual Will and Intelligence, victoriously fulfilling itself, and converting all outer realities into the harmonious manifestation of an inner purpose.

The word "God," in this way, becomes synonymous with a perfect, sacramental, beautiful Order, resting on the ascendancy of the Good; and man, "making his moral being his prime care"—whether in his individual feeling and thought, or in the fields of domestic, civic, or industrial life, or in science, or in art—rises, therefore, into correspondence with the Divine in proportion as he becomes a constituent of this Order. Of such an Order—rightly said to be "supernatural," or of the upper nature, because in it the highest nature subjects all lower natures to itself—the Crucifix, we repeat, is the proper symbol, and the commandment, "take up thy Cross and follow Me," is, for man, the eternal watchword. In Christ upon the Cross we behold the supreme victory of the spirit over the flesh—of a dominant and beneficent love over the carnal self. In that throne of renunciation and lordship He represents that utter effacement of the lower man in which the perfect ascendancy of the higher is made manifest. He represents, therefore, as He hangs there, no merely punitive suppression of the body, but a directing mastery over all its forces, carried to the choice of death, and of such a death that in it sin—which is rebellion against the Order of God—is atoned for and lost in a supreme act of voluntary obedience, and man, following after the Perfect Good, is once more made one with the Divine.

It is not the office of the modern mind to invent a new meaning for Catholicism, but, proceeding on a principle of

<p>The Universality of Christ.</p>	<p>faith, to discern and complete its content of positive and Catholic truth, so bringing it into unifying relation with the total body of human culture. When we say that the Crucifixion is the central point in Catholicism, and that Christ upon the Cross represents, not Christianity only, considered in an exclusive sense, but the whole high religious life of Humanity—</p>
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when we say this, we rest upon the history of man. What, in scholastic terms, we may call the "principle" of the Crucifixion—the principle, namely, that man only finds the fulfilment of his spiritual being in a complete renunciation and command of his lower nature, in a complete affirmation and realization of his highest—this is so surely and plainly a Catholic principle, universal and continuous, that wherever we look at a spiritual Humanity we find it, in varying degree, instinctively acting upon it, or in theory proclaiming it. We see this whether we go back to ancient Judaism, or to ancient Greece, or to ancient Rome, or to ancient India and China; or, coming to our own time, consider human nature as it has often shown itself in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This principle of the Crucifixion is so authoritative and inevitable, that we find a thinker like Comte, professedly atheistic, and treating Christ with contumely, yet founding a systematic morality on love, as expressed in the prescription of "live for others," erecting absolute chastity into a universal ideal, nourishing his own soul every day on the "Imitation of Christ," which is a poem of the Cross, and saying, in pathetic and beautiful, even if paradoxical, words: "In the midst of the heaviest afflictions which can possibly spring from affection, I have not ceased to feel that what is essential for happiness is to have the heart always nobly occupied—even with sorrow, yes, even with sorrow, even with the bitterest sorrow."

The spiritual claim of Christ has been found so incontestable that many of the foremost representatives of the revolution—John Stuart Mill, Carlyle, Herbert Spencer, Renan, Matthew Arnold, George Eliot, and others—have in whatever way, and from whatever point of view, acknowledged it. The doctors of the doctrine of material pleasure, if such there still are, have Humanity against them, for while it is true that man in practice has largely followed the lower instincts, and so followed them as to bring upon himself confusion and degradation, yet in what he has

known to be, and has called, his highest moments, he has confessed a principle counter to the principle of material pleasure—that principle, continuous and universal, which is symbolized and signalled to the world by the Crucifix. In proposing this truth to men, Catholicism, we say, is completely Catholic, and has the warrant of an entire Humanity, which consequently, in time, may be trusted to see itself in Christ upon the Cross. Those revolutionary critics of Catholicism who have supposed that they discredited it by exhibiting its affinities with non-Christian faiths, have, therefore, done the reverse. Their researches and conclusions, it is true, have been valid as against a narrow and exclusive Christianity, which has been unable to affirm its own truth without at the same time denying Humanity; but as against the persisting, progressive, spiritual Catholicism which expresses itself in the Crucifix it is entirely ineffectual. It is the Catholicism of the first Christian ages, and also of the developed modern mind. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” We may say plainly and bluntly, and without irreverence, that if this great saying of the New Testament had been uttered only in one place and on one occasion, and had afterwards found no ratification, it would have had no importance for mankind. What makes it Catholic and sovereign is the fact that it has in substance been uttered again and again, throughout the ages, down even to our own time, by the religious and social heart of man.

It is the Catholic meaning of the Crucifixion—its meaning, not for Christendom only, but for the whole of Humanity, as the consecrating example of man’s submission and government of himself for the ends of Perfection—that gives its Catholic meaning to the Resurrection, understanding by a Catholic meaning, here and always, one which, being religious and spiritual, is also universal, continuous, and progressive. By the Resurrection of Jesus

The Catholic
Meaning
of the
Resurrection.

Christ we cannot, of course, understand a purely physical, or—to use a more exact expression—a purely biological event. Again, we cannot understand by it an event whose significance lies only within the narrow limits of time and space which, as an historic fact, are ordinarily assigned to it. Once more, we cannot properly dissociate it from the other cardinal events of Christ's life—from His public spiritual ministry, His Crucifixion, and His Ascension. If we regard the Crucifixion, as we may properly do, as the culminating act of His earthly life, and His Ascension as marking the beginning of His heavenly or spiritual life, then the Resurrection presents itself as the connecting link between these two terms, and as drawing its significance from them both. So viewed, we do not mean by the Resurrection merely that Jesus Christ, having lived and died with an ordinary physical life, afterwards, by some inexplicable means, “rose from the dead,” and lived again for a certain length of time, with an ordinary physical life, upon the earth. That, assuming it to have taken place as it is described, would certainly have been a marvellous occurrence, but it would not, in itself and standing alone, have been a religious or spiritual occurrence, in the sense in which the public ministry of Christ, His Crucifixion, and His Ascension, are religious and spiritual.

The Resurrection is commonly regarded as the decisive proof of Christ's Divinity, and from this point of view a distinction is drawn between this particular Resurrection and others alleged to have taken place before and since His time. Such a conception of the Resurrection is undoubtedly just, if we see in it, what certainly we ought to see in it, one in a great series of connected spiritual events in the life of Our Lord, relating it, in a representative sense, to the life of Humanity. It is not thus just if we see in it merely a physical or biological event, whose significance, so to speak, spent itself in Palestine, within the limits of a few days, or within the experience of a few persons. If we can picture Christ to ourselves as stripped of the beauty

and glory with which He is clothed in the Gospels, or with which He has been invested by the loving and imaginative homage of the Christian world, then the mere fact of His having, in some inexplicable way, abrogated physical or biological laws would no more be a proof of his Divinity than the levitation of a table, in a modern spiritualistic séance, is a proof of the Divinity of the disembodied spirits to whom it is often ascribed. The power to abrogate or suspend the laws of nature is not in itself a Divine attribute, even when it is assumed to be exercised by a given being in order to bring about his own resuscitation. Such a power, in fact, has often been ranked amongst the characteristic attributes of the diabolic or demoniac. Considered as what we have called a merely biological event, the Resurrection simply means that Jesus Christ, in some way which we are unable to understand, was exempt from the law of mortality which rests upon all living beings; and if this in itself constituted Him a Divine Exemplar, then we should have to conclude that bodily death is the greatest of evils, and that the peculiar privilege of the religious man is that he escapes it, and secures for himself physical immortality.

When we connect the Resurrection with the Crucifixion on the one hand, and with the Ascension on the other, we see the falsity of this conclusion. The lesson of the Crucifixion is that not physical death, but spiritual death, or death by sin, is the greatest of evils; the lesson of the Ascension is that not the abrogation of physical laws, but the sanction and accomplishment of the moral law is the characteristic of the Divine. God does not represent the violation or rupture of order, but its maintenance and beneficence. The Resurrection of Christ is, in principle, one event with His Crucifixion and Ascension. It symbolizes the victory of the higher nature over the lower, and triumphantly, transcendently establishes the truth that while physical life, in all its forms, is subject to death, spiritual or supernatural life—that life which governs all the natural forces for the

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Resurrection
and Christ's
Divinity.

ends of Perfection—is inherently indestructible, and partakes of the eternity of the Divine. In plain words, if we can suppose the Resurrection to be dissociated from all ideas of what we simply call goodness—the perfect or Divine goodness of Christ Himself, the corresponding goodness of all who have worshipped Him—then it ceases to have a religious significance. When we regard it as a proof of His Divinity we are, of course, thinking of it, not as a local, temporary, and physical event, but as a spiritual event, carrying with it continuous consequences.

Scientifically speaking, the one sure, incontestable proof of Christ's Divinity is to be found in the fact that for almost two thousand years He has been actually acknowledged as Divine—that is to say as the supreme personal incarnation or manifestation of a perfect spiritual goodness, summing up the Universal Order — by the highest and most progressive part of mankind. His Divinity, so considered, is a truth of history. Beyond the borders of Christendom, as it is hardly necessary to repeat, He is not, in the same sense, Divine; and if we could suppose that in Christendom itself what we have called atheism—which is especially characterized by its rejection of Christ—would indefinitely increase, then exactly in the proportion in which it did this would the Divinity of Christ cease to be operative in the mind of man. We may be sure that, so long as man acknowledges a Divine Being at all, and follows a principle of prayer and worship, he will continue to acknowledge Christ as Divine, but we cannot be sure that large numbers of men and women will not, for a time at least, embrace atheism, in one or other of its various forms, and so pass out of the community of Christendom. While it is true, as we have already recognized, that, in a certain sense, atheism is impossible, since God, fundamentally, is the Eternal and Universal Order of things, in actual relation with human consciousness, however that Order may be conceived and denominated, still, as that Order is, for the Christian, who is an individual mind

dependent upon the mind of Humanity, symbolically contained and represented in Christ, atheism, which is at once a rejection of Christ and of the highest Humanity, may be conceived of as a revolutionary process having a natural power of indefinitely extending its range.

The Resurrection, then, cannot be considered as a proof of Christ's Divinity when it is regarded merely as the temporary resuscitation of His physical body, or as a mere violation of biologic law; but it is certainly such a proof when we connect it with the character of His life, death, and Ascension, and with the place which He has actually, and as a matter of historic fact, held in the mind of Christian Humanity. It is true, of course, that Christ's Divinity did not at once establish itself, in a settled theologic sense, in that mind. His immediate disciples are, in the Gospels, represented as not recognizing it during His life; and we know that, in one or other of its aspects, it remained controversial and undetermined, as a formal doctrine, for several centuries. This, by some theistic or liberal critics, has been regarded as an argument against it, but if the principle on which we are proceeding is sound, it is, on the contrary, an argument for it. According to that principle, the Divinity of Christ rests, and must rest, for positive and practical purposes, not merely on what is said of Him in ancient documents, but on the place which He has actually gained and maintained in the progressive mind of a religious Humanity. In other words, the Divinity of Christ is a truth of Catholicism. From this point of view the Resurrection represents one great stage in its realization, of which the Ascension is another.

The Ascension has the same significance, relatively to the Divinity of Christ, as the Assumption has relatively to the worship of the Blessed Virgin. It marks the place spiritually and permanently won for Himself by Our Lord in the mind of the Christian world. It is thus the natural sequel to the Resurrection. The account of the Ascension given

in the Book of Acts—according to which, as the disciples were looking, Jesus “was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight”—must be regarded as the simple, symbolic expression of a certain and unquestionable spiritual fact, the most important in the history of mankind—this fact, namely, that Jesus Christ, the Master, the Teacher, the Son of Man, the visible healing, illuminating, and beneficent Presence portrayed for us in the Gospels, had become a perpetual, invisible, spiritual Presence, glorified, Divine and beautiful, in the consciousness of religious man, pursuing an end of Perfection. It was not in a “cloud,” but in the illuminated, illuminating mind of Humanity that He thus ascended. He was, in a physical sense, “received out of their sight,” but to the “mind’s eye” He was revealed, and so revealed that while, in the Gospels, He held an obscure and doubtful place amongst a few disciples, and ended with the ignominy of the Cross—an ignominy which has become for Him victory and Divinity—He has, as an unseen, pervading Power, working by His Holy Spirit in the heart and intelligence of man, entered, century after century, into the religious shaping of civilization. Here we are in the plain way of history, and are face to face with incontrovertible truth.

This is the Catholic principle of the Resurrection. “I have risen and am still with thee” are the words of the Roman Missal, in its office for Easter Sunday; and the modern mind—Catholic with the Catholicism of a synthetic culture and a developed Humanity—may repeat, with a full and thankful consent, the Collect for that feast: “O God, Who on this day, through Thine Only-begotten Son, didst overcome Death, and open unto us the Gate of Everlasting Life: as, by Thy preventing grace, Thou dost breathe good desires into our hearts, so also, by Thy gracious help, bring them to good effect.” What the modern mind says, and what the Church, in its worship, says, is also what St. Paul says, in words which the Church in the Missal presents to us: “Brethren, purge out the old leaven, that you may be

a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed. Therefore, let us feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." The Resurrection of Christ thus understood—and in degree, so it has been palpably understood from the first hours of Catholicism to the present day—is lifted above the mists of doubt and controversy, and becomes a warrant and promise of that life—an unending spiritual oneness with God—which follows from the crucifixion and rule of the flesh.

CHAPTER XVIII

ON THE SCRIPTURES

THE question of the Christian Scriptures—that question which, in the course of a hundred years of criticism and research, has developed into a limitless and insoluble problem—is one which, according to the principles that have governed us throughout this work, admits of a high degree of simplification. Those principles are, as we have seen—first, that the value and effect of any religious conception or document depend not on the alleged circumstances of its origin, or on the view taken of it in antiquity, but on its actual and continuing acceptance and use by the progressive mind of Humanity, proposing to itself the ends of perfection; secondly, that there is, by reasonable faith, or presumption, a body of positive truth, of high and permanent importance, in the whole content of Catholicism, considered as an expression of the spiritual experience and life of Humanity; thirdly, that it is for the developed and synthetic mind of Humanity, reconciling the sure things of Catholicism with the things of modern culture, to discern and illumine this truth, for the practical fulfilment of Catholicism, and the religious unification of man. From this point of view, it is not difficult to determine the place and value of the Christian Scriptures.

By the Christian Scriptures we mean especially, of course, the documents of the New Testament, although, as it is hardly necessary to say, their connection with what, by contradistinction, we call the Jewish Scriptures of the Old

Testament is an essential part of their character and significance. It is one of the elementary and indisputable certainties of Biblical criticism that the Canon of the New Testament, as we have it now, was finally fixed by the year 180. It is equally certain that this settlement of the Canon presupposes—first, the existence at that date of a developed and authoritative Church ; secondly, that the chief documents of the New Testament had then been in existence and use for a period which, if it does not admit of an exact determination, unquestionably extends over many years ; thirdly, and as a consequence, that a process of what we may call criticism, or discrimination, was then brought to bear on them, in virtue of which they were shaped into a definite whole, from which various other documents, on grounds good or bad, were excluded. By the year 180, therefore—to take an historic point as to which there is no dispute—two cardinal and controlling features of Catholicism had emerged into distinctness and permanence—first, the Church ; secondly, the Scriptures. Of these two features—or, if we prefer the word, “sociological phenomena”—the Church is primary and predominant, the Scriptures secondary and dependent. To the Church we owe not only the authoritative Canon of the Scriptures—in other words, the determination of what is Scripture and what is not—but their origin, preservation, and practical interpretation. Whatever may be our views as to the contents, dates, and authorship of the Books of the New Testament, this, at least, is obvious and incontestable—that they, one and all—Gospels, Acts, and Epistles—imply the actual existence of a religious community, with a definite spiritual character, having a certain relation to Judaism, on the one hand, and to what may be broadly called Paganism on the other. These facts are elementary ; they are basic ; they are indisputable ; they are all-important.

But it is not enough, of course, to say this. When we turn to the various documents of the New Testament we

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and the New
Testament
Canon.

must all acknowledge—and this whether we accept the traditional view of their authorship, or subject them to a process of critical dissection—that they are, for the most part, the works of different writers, each with a well-marked individuality of mind and style. Further, we must recognize that, different as they are in many respects, they have all a common, central, informing subject; that subject is Jesus Christ. He is the subject of the four Gospels. He is the subject of the Book of Acts. He is the subject of the Epistles. He is the subject of the Book of the Revelation. There is not a sentence, not a word in the New Testament of which Jesus Christ is not, beyond any doubt, the ultimate theme; and wherever He is referred to, He is referred to with the same religious intention, and has the same essential spiritual marks resting upon Him. He is a recognizable, identical Personality, or Image, painted by different methods, but with an essentially similar effect, by a number of distinct artists.

Lastly, it is certain—and certain with a certainty which is quite beyond the region of discussion—that when the documents of the New Testament were composed, or any one of them, this Personal Image, which is their common and central subject, Jesus Christ, was already living and working, as an effectual spiritual force, in the mind of a religious Humanity—a Humanity represented, if we judge only from the Epistles of St. Paul, by a number of independent communities scattered, at various remote points, over a large part of the Roman Empire. This Personal Image, Jesus Christ, was not only, before the New Testament Scriptures came into existence, thus demonstrably living and working in the minds of men, but was living and working there with the same fundamental character and effect as He has exhibited ever since. It is certain that, at a time when not a single one of the New Testament writings had been penned, Jesus Christ was already—in the minds of a large number of men and

women, distributed over a wide area—an Object of worship, a Teacher, and a Principle of spiritual life, to Whose Name and authority it was possible for the New Testament writers to appeal, with the sure conviction that what they were saying would be commonly intelligible to men, and would be certain to awaken in them a definite response. And this conclusion remains absolutely unshaken even if we hold that all the writings of the New Testament are fictions or forgeries. If they are fictions or forgeries, they are none the less—they are, in a sense, all the more—a testimony to a precedent fact—the fact that when they were composed there was already living and working in the minds of those to whom they were addressed a supreme, predominant, Personal Image, the centralizing idea of a religious society, of sufficient general sanctity and authority to make it possible and profitable to weight a fiction or a forgery with its name. It is, then, as certain as any fact of history or science that before the Christian Scriptures were written, Jesus Christ, as a supreme Spiritual Personality, was a luminous, persuasive, controlling conception throughout a widespread religious society, and that the foundations of Catholicism were already laid.

Concerning this ruling and inspiring Image which had thus demonstrably taken possession of the minds of men, two chief questions present themselves—one subordinate and insoluble, the other supreme, and capable of a scientific treatment and determination. The question which we call subordinate and insoluble is the question of specific origins—the chronological and textual question of the precise way in which this Image first took form and fixity in the human mind. We call this question subordinate for a reason which we have now often assigned—because the character and importance of any religious conception or principle depend not upon its supposed origin, but upon its actual and permanent place in the mind of a progressive Humanity; we call it insoluble, because, as a strict question of science or history, as ordinarily under-

Christ as
Image and
Man.

stood, it does not lie within the sphere of demonstration. This will eventually be recognized, and the sooner it is recognized the better. We are now no nearer a final solution, either positive or negative, of the problem of the authorship and exact dates of the New Testament writings, or of how far they are a real representation of objective events, than when the inquiry first originated. On the contrary, scepticism, uncertainty and contention have gone on ever increasing their range. A criticism which began by casting a timid doubt upon the authenticity of a single document now boldly denies the historic existence of Christ Himself. Even this conclusion, however, such as it is, is only a conjecture the more—one of a number of contradictory hypotheses, some conservative, some revolutionary, and all more or less ephemeral to which the course of Biblical criticism has given rise.

We are, therefore, so far as this particular question is concerned—the question of the precise objective foundation of that Image of a Personal Christ which the New Testament shows us as actually living in the minds of men—compelled to dismiss, as unsolved and insoluble, problems of chronology and authorship, and to rest in a probability, but a probability so variously and well grounded that it deserves to rank with the great historic certainties of mankind. This probability, this certainty, is that behind the Image there is a Man—that Jesus Christ, in all fundamental, positive, and human essentials such as the Image represented Him, and such as He is portrayed in the Gospels, actually lived, taught, and suffered amongst men, impressed Himself upon them, and gave rise to that working, growing idea of Himself which, communicated from mind to mind, and from society to society, and from age to age, has been for nineteen hundred years the effective operative power of the Divine Christ. The fact that about this central Personality elements of what we call legend and myth have gathered is, to the philosophic student of history, so far from being an argument against its reality and

transcendent greatness that it is rather a proof of both. If we are to dismiss from the sphere of historic reality every event or personality with which legend, myth, or miracle has become associated, then we must decide not only that Jesus Christ, but that St. Paul, Plato, Socrates, Julius Cæsar, Constantine, St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, Mohammed, and a host of other famous men and women, Western and Eastern, ancient, medieval, and modern, are destitute of historic reality. History becomes unintelligible on such a principle.

We may, indeed, regard it as a sure canon of historic interpretation that the greater the myth or legend, the greater the fact—either of Nature or of human nature—which, directly or indirectly, and in relation to the transforming mind of man, it represents. This is not a question of textual criticism; it is a question of historic comparison and judgment, and of the demonstrable working of the human mind. The very features of the Gospel narrative which are by some considered as proving that Jesus Christ was not a historic personage, are, from a scientific point of view, sufficient to create an overwhelming presumption to the contrary. Given the actual existence, in the first half of the first century, and in such a part of the world as Palestine, of a man of transcendent and predominant genius, moral, intellectual, or practical, and it is perfectly certain that—as, in fact, frequently happened, even in Western Europe, for centuries afterwards—he would soon have become a centre of legends, myths, and miracles.

The conspicuous affinities between many Christian conceptions and rites and those of earlier religions—affinities which, of course, it is neither possible nor desirable to deny or overlook—do not in the least invalidate this conclusion. They serve to strengthen it. Jesus Christ, either as a man, or as a spiritual image held in the mind, did not—as has already been pointed out, and as is obvious—arise in an empty world. He arose in a world full of living and conflicting forces—a world in which Jewish, Babylonian,

Persian, Egyptian, and Greek religious ideas were as much an influence in one field of the human spirit, as Hellenic art and literature, and the civilization of the Roman Empire, were influences in another. Jesus Christ not only worked upon the minds of others, but—either as an objective presence, or as a still more potent presence of memory and imagination—their minds worked upon Him, bringing to bear upon their conception of Him, spontaneously or deliberately, the culture and traditions of the whole ancient world, Eastern and Western, in so far as they had entered into them. There could be no more decisive proof that, behind the Image of Jesus Christ which was living in the consciousness of men when the New Testament writings were composed, there was an actual predominant personality than the fact that amidst all these competing forces this Image remained constant and commanding, receiving certainly, but giving infinitely more than it received, and exhibiting a power to shape and unite, to kindle, illumine, and govern, even while it necessarily underwent a vast, continuous play of antagonistic forces.

Those who have sought to resolve the idea of Christ into a mere complex of impersonal and heterogeneous elements, drawn by some unknown process, and without an apparent co-ordinating mind, from Jewish, Egyptian, Persian, and Babylonian sources, have apparently overlooked the fact that not in a single one of the countries from which Christianity is thus supposed to have derived its being, and which it ought, therefore, to have represented, has it ever had an indigenous existence. It spread and developed elsewhere ; and its greatest sphere of manifestation and expansion has been, not amongst the ancient votaries of obscure and declining Oriental sects, but in the field of Western energy and civilization—the home of the poet, the artist, the philosopher, the scientific investigator, the soldier, the statesman, the geographical discoverer, and the industrialist, who, in one way or another, have come into the dominion of Jesus Christ, not less than the Apostles, Saints, and rulers of the

Catholic Church. A large number of modern critics have spent so much strength in trying to do what they cannot do—unveil the precise origins of primitive Christianity—that they have neglected to look for the meaning of Christianity where alone, sociologically and historically, it is to be found—in the actual life and development of the Christian world. The distinction is sometimes drawn between the “Christ of History” and the “Christ of Faith.” It is an artificial and illusory distinction. The Christ of History is the Christ of Faith.

We come, then, to the second of the two great questions which arise in connection with that Image of Jesus Christ

Christ in which, nineteen hundred years ago, began to
Catholic establish itself and work in the human mind—
Humanity. that question which we have called supreme, and which, at the same time, does really lie within the scope of scientific determination. This question is the question of the place actually and continuously held by Jesus Christ in the mind of Christendom. The laborious erudition of German Protestantism has largely spent itself upon a mistaken metaphysical quest—upon an attempt to reverse the continuous religious judgment of Humanity concerning Christ, and, by some sifting, analytic process, to discover, amidst a chaos of shattered theories, dismembered texts and shifting conjectures, some remote and shadowy figure of an absolute Jesus. This attempt has failed, and can never succeed. No individual mind, or school of critics, can, in regard to the religious conception of Christ, subvert the mind of Humanity. Our power of resistance to that mind is certainly real, and admits of being exactly defined. It is the power of suicide. We may—in religion, as in other great fields of culture—refuse what Humanity offers us. We may be atheists, and decline altogether the spiritual life of prayer and worship. This many men actually do. This many more men may come to do. But if we choose religion, we choose Christ, and if we choose Christ, we choose Him not by any unaided,

individual power of our own minds, but as He is presented to us by the continuous, governing mind of Humanity.

The mind of Humanity presents Him to us as Divine. The mind of Humanity presents Him to us through the Catholic Church. We have no power of relating ourselves to that obscure and spectral personality of Christ which German erudition and our English "higher criticism" have been occupied in trying to disinter from the ruins of "orthodoxy"; we have a power, and a great power, of relating ourselves to that living Image of spiritual, sovereign, self-sacrificing, and self-ordering Love, which, for so many centuries, has worked, as an attractive and directing force, upon the heart and life of mankind, and which the Catholic Church, in worship and teaching, puts before us. That Image was, and is, the Image of a Divine Humanity, Incarnate in a personal form. That Image is the Image of God—using the word "God," as in the synthetic theology and the modern Catholic mind we are able to do, not in a sense which makes it equivalent to the blank negation of all experience, but, on the contrary, in a sense which rests upon and embraces all experience, contained, and symbolically expressed, in a single, radiant, spiritual Figure. The Jesus Christ of the "higher" Biblical criticism, man has never known, and can never know. He is not real to science; He is not real to the religious heart. The Jesus Christ of Catholicism, Who is real to both, is rooted in our spiritual being, in so far as our spiritual being is one with the highest spiritual being of Humanity.

It is in relation to Christ, so conceived, that the Scriptures of the New Testament have an imperishable value. This

Poetry and
Science.

value depends, in principle, on a distinction which, although it may only have been systematically apprehended and defined in the modern world, has, in actual practice and in degree, always been understood in Catholicism—the distinction, namely, between scientific and poetic conceptions and modes of

expression. This distinction does not correspond to the difference between reality and fiction, but to the difference between one kind of reality and another, and between one way of representing reality and another. Such differences are so far from being mere artifices of mental refinement, that they are well within the cognizance of common sense. The field of science is, objectively considered, the same as the field of poetry—using the word “poetry” here, as we have before used it, to represent not only verse, and such prose as, in beauty and measure, comes near to it, but also the kindred arts of music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. When Wordsworth, for example, looks at a daisy, he looks at exactly the same flower as that which is examined by the botanist. The botanist, however, as such, is concerned only with its structure and life, or with its place in the vegetable kingdom. When he has determined these, his interest in the flower is at end. It is not so with the poet. To him the daisy is a thing of beauty, which has a power of awakening sensibilities and imaginations of higher beauty in the human spirit, and of linking itself with holy memories and pure, exalting emotions of awe and gladness :

“Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears ;
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

That is the voice, that is the mind of the poet, either as he looks out upon the world of external nature—the world of earth and water, of skies and stars, of flowers and birds and animals, and of the outward forms of men and women ; or as he looks in upon the theatre of the human soul, where all things, natural and “supernatural,” diabolic and Divine, are concerned in a dim, mysterious, eternal drama. The scientific mind is dealing with exactly the same world as the mind of the poet, but it deals with that world objectively, to ascertain the constant relations of things, to measure and calculate, to form categories, to predict and use. The office of science is to teach us how to discover,

how to think, what things we must think, where we must resign ourselves, where we can act, and how best we can act, whether in the sphere of industrial life, or in the conduct of social affairs. It is a great office. It is a religious office; for, in unfolding to us the powers and laws of the Universal Order, science makes known to us, according to its own methods, the nature of God, and helps us—using that human, symbolic language which, in reference to such high matters, we are compelled by the constitution of our minds to employ—to bring ourselves into harmony with Him, and to do His Will.

But great and indispensable as this office of science is—for purposes either of theory or practice—it is a limited office, and has direct relation only with a definite period in the life of the individual man. Except in the case of those for whom scientific investigation or instruction is a function, and allowing for its vast industrial uses, we may say that we are only directly concerned with science during the short season of our intellectual training. Its severe processes of proof and exposition are not normal with man; they are abnormal. They are almost “supernatural”—using this word, as we have so often here employed it, to denote what is rare and high in Humanity, as distinguished from what is common and habitual. Broadly speaking, we may say that science is for the school, while poetry, including and representing all the arts, is for the whole of life—for man as he relates himself, in contemplation, memory, imagination, and hope, in joy, sorrow, yearning, awe, and fear, to the outer facts of nature, or to the inner invisible visions of the good and the beautiful, which are present with him almost from the cradle to the grave. The language of poetry, and of the other arts, represents objective things not in their recurrent, measurable relations with other objective things, but as they enter into the constructive and transforming human spirit. The language of science and the language of poetry are both the language of truth, but the truth of poetry is the

full, abundant, and idealized truth of feeling and imagination, of love, desire, and spiritual will. It is in this way that the language of poetry, in the large sense, is a more complete expression of man in his total humanity than the language of science. It is, in spite of its ordered art, more natural and spontaneous, as well as more beautiful. It is, in varying degree, universally and directly intelligible. It is akin to the common speech of men, for in our common speech—the speech of feeling as it comes to us, and of life as we live it—we are much nearer to the spaciousness, pregnancy, symbolic suggestiveness, and elliptic ease of the poet, than we are to the painful exactitude of scientific abstractions and definitions.

The language of the New Testament is poetic. The Gospels are the Poem of God. In saying this we simply say that of the two chief categories of human speech—the scientific and the poetic—the utterance of the Gospels falls into that which is highest and noblest, and which has the fullest relation to what is highest and noblest in the life of man. From the dawn of culture to the present day—from the age of Homer and the Psalmist to the age of Tennyson—man has instinctively put his religion into song, or into prose kindled and made musical with something of the richness and rhythm of song. To say of the four Gospels, therefore, that they are, in all deeper essentials, a poem, is to say of them that, having as their subject an ideal of transcendent Perfection, they have naturally expressed the sense and power of that ideal in language of corresponding perfection. Such language is the language of inspiration. It is the language of immortality.

When, however, we say that the Gospels are a poem we by no means imply that they are devoid of historic character. They are historic with a truth and power such as we never find in histories ordinarily so-called. The greatest historians of ancient Greece are not Herodotus and Thucydides, but Homer, Æschylus, and Phidias. The greatest histo-

rians of Israel are the Psalmist and the Prophets, for they show us what to the "sociologist" is of most significance—its characteristic spirit and life. In the same way, the writers of the four Gospels, although they are poets—or, rather, because they are poets—are the greatest historians of Christianity. They exhibit to us what is central and eternal in it—Christ, as He established Himself in the mind and life of Humanity, shaping, and yet shaped, a Presence of light in darkness, a Presence of purity in a tumult of contending passions, a Presence of self-denying love in a world of self-assertion, an Image of spiritual Beauty amidst the sordidness of the carnal man, a Voice of tenderness, peace and unity amidst strife and insurrection. Christ came, and the Image of Christ came, before the Gospels; but the Gospels show Him to us in the great field of His Divinity, which is not Palestine, or even Corinth and Rome, but the mind of Humanity, holding all lands and ages within its luminous comprehensiveness. They show us, too, that when He entered that field He entered it to take His place there along with other powers, some of which were there already, some of which came into it afterwards. If the early Christian conception of Christ was influenced by Judaism, as we know was the case, then it was also indirectly influenced by what had acted upon Judaism itself, as well as directly by the various forces with which Christianity, in its nascent, fluid state, came directly into contact. What we are here concerned with—the thing which is of fundamental and universal importance—is the place held by Christ in the mind of Humanity, and first of all in the minds of the early Christians. That place was not absolute and independent. To suppose that it was is contrary to history, to science, and to common sense. It was conditioned by their culture and needs—by Judaism, by Paganism, and by the exigencies of the social state, as well as by the presiding, illuminating Spirit of Him who came to deliver man from himself, and to give him a new vision and a new life.

When we have once recognized that the Gospels, and, in varying degree, the other Books of the New Testament, are the Poem of the Divine Christ—giving not a literal, ordered, objective history of His life, but, what is much more important, a history of His life as it took form and meaning in the mind of a religious Humanity—then certain great consequences inevitably follow. We go to the Gospels with a right expectation; we use them with a right power. We see that in the interpretation of this Poem, as in the interpretation of the other great poems of the world, a rigid literalism has no place. This, of course, is no new discovery. It would be perfectly easy to show, if it were necessary, that the Apostles, Fathers, and preachers of the Christian Church have habitually used the New Testament for religious purposes with a sense that its language was the language of figure and symbol, rather than of objective prose precision. Even Protestantism, in its most literal moments, has exhibited this sense. The Church, it is true, has not always been consistent in this. For sectarian, controversial, and doctrinal purposes, it has tended to forget what in worship and spiritual application it has remembered, and it has then treated the mood and style of the New Testament as if they were the mood and style of a scientific treatise, or a formal history. Nevertheless, in so far as the intention of religious possession and use, as distinguished from the intention of polemic and dialectic, has governed the Church, the Scriptures have been interpreted in the large and free way which is proper in the use of the poets.

Therefore, when we say that the Gospels are the Poem of Christ, we are—following a principle which we have observed throughout—only developing and formulating a thought which has always, in a certain measure, spontaneously worked in the mind of the Church. The complete recognition and acceptance of this truth are, however, of the highest consequence. From the point of view which it gives to us we see in what sense it is that the Gospels are a

history, and how great is their real historic claim. History, as ordinarily understood, is largely a history of things that pass; the Gospels are a history of things that remain. In that history we see Christ not merely as He was, but as He is. His stage is no longer Palestine; it is the world. Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, the Desert, the Mount of Olives, the Jordan, the Sea of Galilee—these have become the symbolic scene where a transcendent Presence moved, and still moves, to heal, to teach, and to bless a world of evil and sorrow. As it is a common thing with Catholic preachers to tell us, for example, that the leprosy which Christ cured is sin, and that the storm-tossed vessel in which He moved across the waters is a type of the Church, so we may see in the little country of Palestine the vast theatre of the life of man; in the figure of Our Lord a Divine, Transfigured, Personal Humanity, breathing forth illumination and peace, and calling all things to Itself; and in the Gospels an expression, in terms of imaginative awe and homage, of the responsive and shaping soul of man, as he enters into vivifying relation with It. Palestine, in itself, and objectively considered, is only a moderately interesting country. Jerusalem has been for centuries a Mohammedan possession. The Jews are a displaced and scattered race. The Pharisee, the Sadducee, and the Scribe have, to the modern mind, become the representatives of vanished parties and functions. But Christ remains, and is still Our Lord. And Mary remains, and is still Our Lady. And the Gospels remain, and are still the Poem of a Divine Perfection. And the Catholic Church remains—that Church which, nineteen hundred years ago, began to receive Christ and Our Lady into its mind, and, relating them to the culture and ordered life of the world, to present them to mankind as powers of spiritual perfection, universal and eternal.

But if, recognizing that the Scriptures are a Poem—poetic in their conception of Christ, and poetic in their presentation of Him—we are rescued from a blighting and confusing literalism, so we are saved from the anarchy

and waste of Biblical criticism. This criticism has sprung from literalism—from the common traditional tendency to treat Christianity as if it were a thing absolute and exclusive in the life of mankind, and the Christian Scriptures, as if they were cast in the style of science. When we see, what is the truth, that the Gospels are a Poem, Biblical textual criticism, in the intention which has hitherto animated it, ceases to have a *raison d'être*. It has indirectly, and to some extent unconsciously, accomplished a great work, for, negatively at least, it has helped to bring in the view of Scripture as an inspired poetic utterance of the human mind, moved by the vision of Christ. William Blake said of Voltaire that God had sent him into the world to destroy the literal interpretation of the Scriptures. That may seem an extravagant and fantastic statement, but it expresses an important truth. Literalism, of course—subject to the corrections of use—had its place, and served an important purpose. It marks a stage in man's progressive intelligence and culture. In proportion, however, as man has tended to move out of that stage literalism has become a hindrance to him, for literalism, under such circumstances, simply means the power of a lower religious sense and culture operating against the power of a higher. Therefore, in so far as Voltaire actually helped to destroy literalism, he helped to enlarge Catholicism, although he may have done this without any corresponding consciousness and insight.

But Voltaire did his work in this field, such as it was, and is gone. The Scriptures remain. In the same way, modern Biblical criticism—better equipped, wider in its survey, deeper in its aims and processes, more serious in its spirit than Voltaire's—will go, but the Scriptures will remain; and they will remain not truncated and disfigured by textual analysis, uneasily searching in them for some irreducible minimum of archæological truth, but in that beautiful integrity with which they have wrought upon the mind of the world. They remain, they live, they work, by

their own inherent truth and greatness, as they have passed into the power of Catholicism ; because, in proportion as men feel deeply in religion, and are engaged in the quest for spiritual perfection, and seek deliverance from themselves, and enter into communion with the high heart of Humanity, occupied with the same quest, the Poem of God—presenting to them the Image of God become Man in its eternal and consoling beauty—helps them to recover their sense of ideal Goodness, and to rise from weakness and despondency to the hope and power of a new life. The Scriptures live because they yield perpetual nourishment to the religious spirit ; criticism will die because it does not—and die all the sooner, and all the more certainly, in the absence of ecclesiastical proscriptions and denunciations.

It is to no purpose to prove, when we do prove, that the New Testament writings have other dates and other authors than those traditionally assigned to them ; or that they are not a strict objective record ; or that in the picture of Christ which is painted there we find features and colours drawn from older religious conceptions ; or that, in the great institutions of Catholic worship, there are obvious resemblances to previous rituals. These things are all true, but they are only disconcerting to those who have built their Catholicism on something which is not Catholic—on a narrow and unsound foundation. The religious power of Christ, of the Scriptures, and of Catholicism, has not, as an historic fact, rested upon any theories as to authorship, chronology, or historical accuracy. It has rested upon an actual correspondence between what they have represented and the mind and life of a progressive Humanity. First came Jesus Christ ; then the Image, or Spirit, of Christ ; then the Church ; then the Scriptures ; then Catholicism. Christ has a universal representative importance. Otherwise He would not be Divine. Nevertheless, His greatest importance is derived from what has come after Him, and not from what went before Him—from the living developing things of Western Europe, and not from

the dead things of the East. The critics, therefore, who have sought for the secret of Christ in Judaism, or in Mithraism, or amidst the ruins of ancient Egypt or Greece, have devoted their erudition to a sociological solecism and an historic blunder. The secret of Christ is to be sought for in Catholicism, which has its own age in the world, its own place, its own character, its own witnesses—which entered, indeed, into the inheritance of ancient things, but gave them a wider and higher life, and which, adopting exactly the same principle and process, but adopting them with a fuller consciousness and power, is destined to bring in the still higher and wider life of the Catholic future.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHURCH

THE meaning of the Catholic Church—of its basic conceptions, of its Scriptures, of its Doctrines, Worship and Organization—is a meaning given in the actual history of its formation and development ; and, therefore, the significance of what it was and did in its first ages can only be determined from the point of view of what it has since become. Throwing ourselves back, by an exercise of historic imagination, upon the emerging Christian communities of the second half of the first century, we can now see what was the nature of the great task which they were called upon to embrace, what were the ideas and the temper which they brought to bear upon it, what were their resources in prosecuting it, and what was their situation, as they prosecuted it, relatively to the non-Christian world. Their task was to imprint the Divinity or Perfection of Christ upon the life of man, individual and social. This was the work of Catholicism in the first century ; it is the work of Catholicism now ; it will continue to be its work so long as Humanity exists, a conscious being, haunted by an ideal of itself which it has not realized. It was not, and it cannot be, the aim of Catholicism simply to be Catholic ; it has become Catholic in proportion as it has brought in the universality of the reign of Christ.

It was inevitable that by the early Christians this great progressive purpose should be dimly and uncertainly apprehended. They could not see the long line of the centuries

that lay before them, or understand that they were called upon to found a new civilization. They were men of differing religious and social antecedents, and of every variety of capacity and culture. They had, it is true, one supreme possession in common—the spiritual Image of Jesus Christ; but this Image was not then, any more than it is now, a principle of magic, suddenly abrogating or transforming everything that it touched, and establishing itself with an absolute ascendancy in its place. If we could conceive it as operating in such a way, then the whole history of Christianity would have been different. It did not, in fact, so operate. The Jew into whose mind Christ entered became, of course, a changed man, but he did not become the same man as the Gentile who had undergone a similar influence; while, amongst the Gentiles themselves, the Greek, the Roman, the Oriental, and afterwards the men of the new European nations, received Christ indeed, but received Him with much the same differences of sensibility and response as are exhibited by different minds in relation to the same piece of music, or the same fair scene of nature. Over and above the various resistant and shaping forces of religion and nationality, there were, of course, differences of personal temper, intelligence, culture and character. Christ, not being a principle of magic, acting by the annihilation of things, but a principle of Divine Law, acting by the consent and co-operation of Humanity, and capable, therefore, of being resisted and rejected—Christ, being this, has never produced exactly the same results in the selfish and sensual man as in the loving and pure, in the stupid as in the intelligent, in the ignorant as in the cultivated, in the weak as in the strong, in the young as in the old, in the fierce and intolerant as in the gentle and sympathetic. He touches them all; He does not leave them as they were; He brings them into a Brotherhood; but He does not abolish their original differences of disposition, mind and will, any more than He abolishes their differences of complexion and stature. This is what is taught in the

Parable of the Sower ; this is what is shown in the history of Christianity ; this is what is exemplified in the Crucifixion, where we see Christ conquering, indeed, and yet suffering death.

It is clear, for example, from such a document as the First Epistle to the Thessalonians—apart from any question as to its precise date and authorship—that neither its writer, nor those to whom it was addressed, had the slightest idea of the truth that they were, in fact, entering upon a work which, after almost two thousand years, would still be prosecuted, and concerning which some would then hold that it remained a work of hope and promise, while others would regard it as a delusion. Rome, Greece, Israel, and Egypt they knew ; but they could not know that five hundred years before Christ Buddha and Confucius had founded vast spiritual dominions ; that Hinduism governed a more ancient community still ; that five hundred years after Christ Mohammed would arise to dispute with Him the rule of the East ; that fourteen hundred years after this all these great systems of belief would continue to exist, developed and powerful, side by side with Christianity ; and that new continents and creeds would then have been brought to light which to the whole world of antiquity were unknown.

As it seemed to the Thessalonian Christians, and to the author of the Epistle addressed to them, the “end” of this world was at hand, and Christ, the Master of all things, was shortly to reappear. “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” In this simple, picturesque, pathetic language—the language of one of the unconscious poems of the New Testament—we have a decisive testimony to the way in which the Image of Christ worked in the minds of the early

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Christians, and to the expectations which it bred in them. Those expectations may be called the expectations of magic. Christ, to those who held them, was, in part at least, a principle of magic—such a principle as, in the “Arabian Nights,” or in a fairy-tale, is invoked to build or destroy a palace in a night, or to transport a man in a moment from Africa into Asia. The principle of magic is, of course, not the principle of the supernatural. The principle of the supernatural is the principle of the higher nature continuously overcoming and ordering the lower; it is, in the language of St. Paul, the “law of the mind” restraining and dominating the “law of the lower members.” The principle of magic knows no law. It is the antithesis of law. It encounters no difficulties. It experiences no failures. Undoubtedly in the mind of the Catholic Church—from the time of the Epistle to the Thessalonians, which is by some considered to be its earliest document, down to the present day—we find the ideas and expectations of magic asserting themselves. The language of this Epistle, with other similar language in other Scriptures, has impressed itself upon the speech of the Church. The Church, however, has not been a Church of magic. It has known difficulties, and has overcome them; it has succeeded, and it has failed. It has received Christ into its mind, but its mind, instead of being always a fair and even mirror of His perfection, has often reflected His Image distorted or obscured by its own inherent falsities and darkness.

Nevertheless, it remains true that to the Catholic Church we owe the reign of Christ in the world. The Epistle to the Thessalonians bears witness to the principle of magic which worked, and has continued to work, in its mind; but it bears witness also to that educating, ordering power which it has always put forth to bring Christ into the life of man—not as a principle of magic, breeding illusory and unwholesome expectations, but as a principle of spiritual self-mastery and

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Morals.

goodness, giving illumination and peace to Humanity. "We exhort you, brethren," says the writer of this Epistle, "admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil ; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all. Rejoice always ; pray without ceasing ; in everything give thanks : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward you. Quench not the Spirit ; despise not prophesyings ; prove all things ; hold fast that which is good ; abstain from every form of evil."

In this early Christian writing, therefore, we see, brought into relief, the two principles which have always worked in Catholicism—one which we have called the principle of magic, the other the principle of spiritual law. It has been the office of the Church, while not, in theory, disregarding the principle of magic—while often, indeed, boldly affirming it, and making a large and free appeal to it, to obviate or neutralize its evil effects by using it as one of the sanctions of a religious discipline and rule of life. It has done this, of course, not so much by intention, or by the calculations of deliberate policy, as because of the nature and requirements of the task which has devolved upon it. That task was, as we have said, to establish and develop the moral and social order of Catholicism—an order founded upon Christ. This was a practical task, in each of its great domains of worship, doctrine, and discipline ; and in proportion as the Church proceeded with this task, it developed in sufficient degree the practical wisdom—the power of adapting means to ends—which such a task demanded.

The Church was not, as we should say to-day, scientific. Societies have not been founded by sociologists, any more than the heavenly bodies have been invented by astronomers, or languages and literatures by critics and grammarians. The Church was, to begin with, an unorganized company of men and women, in whose minds was an invisible Presence. That Presence was the Image, or Holy

Spirit of Christ—"proceeding from the Father and the Son"—a Presence, an Image, an illuminating Wisdom, which attracted them towards its own perfection, and moved them to realize it in their lives. This, at first, was the one great resource of those men and women. They had the Image of Christ, His Holy Spirit, His living Tradition. They had, as Christians, nothing else. Then this living Tradition produced the Scriptures. It has been held by some Catholic writers that the Tradition alone—the continued fructifying presence of Christ in the minds of men—would, even without the Scriptures, have sufficed for the work of the Church; and it is certain, first, that without the Church there would have been no Scriptures; secondly, that the Scriptures worked concurrently with the Tradition, and, for fifteen hundred years, reached the mind of the community mainly through the mind of the priesthood; thirdly, that the priesthood, even under Protestantism, has always been the chief organ of their interpretation and application. When, however, the Gospels had been put together, the Church, besides the living spiritual Image of Christ, possessed, as a perpetual resource, the Poem of Christ, in which this Image, as it had established itself in the minds of its authors, was presented in a fixed, eternal, beautiful form. This is the double basis in Christ—as distinguished from its basis in human culture—on which the Catholic Church has rested. It has been said—as, for instance, by Auguste Comte—that Jesus Christ was not the founder of Catholicism, but rather St. Paul. Those who have said this have doubtless said it with an intention derogatory to Jesus Christ, but, in the only sense in which it is true, it is not derogatory. Jesus Christ, if the distinction may be allowed, is not so much the "Founder" of the Church as its Foundation. We do not worship Him as our Founder, but as Our Lord. The office of a Founder is properly lower and more limited. St. Paul is a great, illustrious, immortal teacher, who combines the instincts of the Saint, the imagination of the poet, and the wisdom of

the philosopher ; but it was not his image that was working in the minds of the Christians at Rome when he addressed to them his wonderful Epistle ; and it is not his image that is enshrined in the Gospels, and stamped upon the life of the Church. “ Other foundation can no man lay,” he himself says, “ than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

The practical, organic Catholic Church—which, in the progressive shaping of civilization, has proposed to itself

Development of the Church.	in the region of the religious life what art has proposed to itself in the region of beauty, science in the region of demonstrable truth, and politics and industry in their respective spheres—was, then, in the individual and social realization of Christ, forced upon certain successive measures and developments without which the accomplishment of that task would have been impossible. Those measures and developments followed*because Christ, as the Divine or ideal Image of human perfection, was given, and because the work of the Church, however ill- understood and prosecuted, was to bring men and women throughout the world into correspondence with Him, and therefore into unity with one another, thus constituting an organized and growing community. From the Christian life of the individual soul, submitting itself, in its imper- fection, to the Divine Perfection, sprang the Christian family, the Christian State, and that vast order of Christian states or nations which we call Christendom—an order of the East and of the West, but only assuming its fully pro- gressive and typical character in the union of independent peoples held together in a spiritual bond, which constitutes the distinctive community of Western Europe. Out of this progressive working of Christ in the soul of man proceeded, stage by stage and age after age, the great conceptions and instruments of Catholic worship—the exaltation of Our Lady, the veneration of the Saints, the Breviary, the Missal, the Sacraments, the noble temples of East and West, and, of course, the organized priesthood, with its centre and direc- tion in Rome. Gradually the whole life of man—almost
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every hour of the day, and every day and season of the year—felt the consecrating and informing presence of this supreme Image; and even men gross in appetite, ignorant in mind, and plunged in barbaric strife, somehow became conscious, in however slight a degree, and amidst whatever illusions and misconceptions, of a Power in them and about them, unseen, but omnipresent, which they could resist, but not ignore, and neglect, but not condemn, and which, in proportion as they received it into the soul, brought to them blessedness and peace. The Councils, the Creeds, the Saints, the Monasteries, the Religious Orders, the Doctors of the Church—all, in different ways, have borne witness to the same Power, penetrating the vast body of Humanity, bringing it, in some measure at least, into accord with itself, and, in Western Europe at any rate, calling forth a great company of poets, musicians, painters, sculptors, architects, and teachers, to disclose, in word and sound and form, its inspiration of beauty and truth.

This has been the work of the Catholic Church, from the time when it first began to hold the Image, or Creative Spirit, of Christ in its heart down to the present day—from the age of St. Paul to the age of Pope Pius X. The essential nature and methods of that work, as a work for bringing men into spiritual community by bringing them individually into communion with the Perfection of Christ, are, of course, signally shown in the conception and institution of the sacraments, and especially, of course, of the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. In these sacraments we see again exemplified the two principles which, as we have said, have been visibly operative throughout the whole history of Catholicism, and which find their earliest expression in the Epistle to the Thessalonians. One of these is the principle of magic; the other is the principle of spiritual law—of the higher, or supernatural, powers of Humanity acting upon and governing the lower.

The sacrament of Baptism, as it has been actually in-

stituted in the Catholic Church, is one of the creations of the practical wisdom of the priesthood, taking advantage in part, here as elsewhere, of previous non-Christian rites. It is the office of the priesthood—which, of course, is only the organ or instrument of a religious community—to keep men continuously living in Christ. In Baptism it takes the first step in the discharge of this office. Every child comes into the world in a state of utter dependence upon others, material and spiritual. It is born, too, with various instincts, physical, moral, and intellectual, some of which immediately disclose themselves, while others are more or less latent and potential. According to Catholic theology, an infant is tainted with “original” or transmitted “sin.” The scientific meaning of this is that it is under the influence of certain inherent appetites or impulses which, if they are not held in check, may afterwards, under a given stimulation, carry it into sin.

The word “sin” does not represent an entity. It is an abstract term, the meaning of which we can only find by resolving it into specific feelings, thoughts, words, and deeds. Of none of these is a new-born child capable. There can be no sin where there is no relative consciousness or responsibility. It is evident that animals sometimes eat too much, but we do not call an animal that does this a glutton. The poem of the Garden of Eden remains to this day, in spite of all that criticism has urged against it, a beautiful, symbolic representation of permanent relations of human life, but it is necessary to understand it in a sense congruous with reason. Adam and Eve, as they are pictured to us, were not infants. They were companions of the Divinity. They had the sense of spiritual responsibility completely developed. They possessed the full capacity of judgment and will. Their sin was deliberate and voluntary disobedience to a known law. A new-born infant is not comparable with Adam, as he consciously walked with God. It could only inherit his “sin” if it inherited his prescience and power, and, therefore, his responsibility.

Nevertheless, there is a substantial positive foundation for what is called the doctrine of original sin, as for other great doctrines of the Church. It is the unscientific expression of a scientific truth. The new-born child does not inherit "sin," but it does inherit desires and propensities which, innocent as they are in themselves, may yet, under certain conditions, and unless they are subject to discipline, involve it in sin. It is because of this that the sacrament of Baptism, and especially infant Baptism, is of so great an importance. That importance does not depend upon any magic power in it. An infant after it has been baptized is, in itself, exactly the same child as before, with the same instincts and propensities, high and low, and therefore, with the same potential capacity for good and evil. But in Baptism it is, according to the intention of its parents, or guardians, and of the Church "born again," a child of God. It is consecrated to Christ—rescued, if only by the solemn assertion of a high purpose and ideal, from the mere life of the flesh, and raised to the dignity of a spiritual being, who has entered into the way of the Divine. Baptism, therefore, may be said to stand for the whole religious economy of human life—for that conscious, deliberate policy by which man, in his "natural" imperfection, dedicates himself to a "supernatural" Perfection, and elects to pursue it, from one stage to another of his existence. When the Church declares that an infant dying unbaptized is not "saved," it simply gives emphatic expression, in its own traditional terms, to what is certainly an important truth—the truth that every human soul is, from its first moment, of consequence in Christ, and apart from Christ—apart, that is, from that rule of the flesh by the spirit which Christ represents—is of no consequence at all.

Baptism, however, only accomplishes its spiritual end when it is the first in a number of successive steps of a like character and effect to itself. If the parents of a baptized child become atheists, and give it their atheism; or if it grows up to be an atheist itself; or if, without being professedly

atheistic, it lives and dies a merely carnal being, then it is clear that its Baptism has, for practical purposes, been rendered inoperative. In other words, the sacrament of Baptism cannot properly be regarded as a magic rite, which produces effects independently of human will and effort. It is the first great step in Christian culture. In regard to this important ceremony, as in regard to so many of the institutions of the Church, we may well recall the wholesome sentence of Bishop Butler, which Matthew Arnold was so fond of quoting: "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be. Why, then, should we deceive ourselves?"

The supreme achievement of the Church in the pursuit of its eternal aim—the bringing of the perfection of Christ into the life of man—has been the institution of the sacrament and sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. As Baptism marks and effects the commencement of the life in Christ, so the Holy Eucharist marks and effects its renewal and development. It has no other aim than this. There is in this central, illuminating, and unifying rite, as in the other great ordinances of Catholicism, no magic power, acting irrespectively of human consent and co-operation. It does not work on men by a sort of talismanic or mesmeric process. Jesus Christ Himself, according to the Gospels, did not so work upon men when He lived. Some received Him and learned from Him; others rejected Him and crucified Him. He has Himself taught these truths: "Ask, and ye shall receive: knock, and it shall be opened unto you: to him who has much, much shall be given, and from him who has nothing, the little that he has shall be taken away." That is none the less the voice of Supreme Wisdom, because it is also the voice of what we are accustomed to call common sense. In the Holy Eucharist, therefore, whether considered as a sacrament or as a sacrifice, there is no process of magic. From either point of view, its purpose is to renew in men, so far as this may be possible—if only by the quickening of gratitude and spiritual yearning—the Perfection of

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Christ. It succeeds in so far as it accomplishes this purpose ; it fails—and in a high degree it is plain that it constantly fails—in proportion as it does not. Undoubtedly, into the Holy Eucharist, as into the other sacraments, what we have called the motive of magic has entered, as well as the motive of spiritual transformation. By the motive of magic, once more, we do not mean the motive of the supernatural, or the motive of mystery. The supernatural, which is the highest known nature, enters into the domain of law, and mystery is stamped throughout upon human experience. By this principle of magic we mean the antithesis of that principle which Christ proclaimed—that to him who has much, much shall be given. Magic takes no account of forces of resistance, or forces of co-operation. It exercises an abrogating or transforming power. It is a geomantic or necromantic art.

There is no such art in Christ, or in the Holy Eucharist, as it spiritually renews His sacrifice, and gives us access to His Perfection. But certainly in the conception and language of the Church, as it has instituted this great ordinance, the motive of magic has found a place. This was inevitable. The Church itself, as we have said, was not a Church of magic, but a Church of men and women, who sometimes succeeded, and sometimes failed, who were sometimes ignorant and sometimes learned, and who received and conceived Christ according to their personal powers of mind and culture. In the institution of the Holy Eucharist they were undoubtedly influenced by previously existing sacrificial rites, in which, by the actual reception of the flesh and blood of the victim, the worshippers supposed themselves to become partakers of the nature of the Divinity whom they adored. This influence of pre-Christian ceremonies on Christianity the *Agnus Dei* of the Mass is sufficient to show. The voluntary oblation of Christ has, in Christianity, been constantly understood as replacing and superseding the sacrifices of the Jewish law. But it has also replaced and superseded

the sacrifices of the Gentile world. Those modern critics who have insisted on the resemblances between certain Pagan rites and the Holy Eucharist have, perhaps, supposed that in establishing them they have discredited Christianity. If this has been their view, they have been mistaken; they have certainly helped to discredit what was discreditable in Christianity—the sectarian, non-Catholic exclusiveness which has made it look with contempt upon the whole non-Christian world, as alien to the Kingdom of God.

In doing this, however, they have rendered a signal service to Christianity—a service comparable to that which, according to the view of William Blake, was rendered by Voltaire when he helped to destroy the literal interpretation of the Scriptures. We do not enhance the glory of Catholicism by denying a religious value to the Pagan faiths which it superseded, and in part incorporated, any more than we should enhance it by denying a religious value to Judaism. Catholicism derives its title—a title which is positive and incontestable—from the fact that it has been the faith of Humanity in the highest plane of its progressive intelligence and power. This title is not in the least affected by the fact that in the religions of the ancient world we find many ceremonies and institutions similar to those of Christianity. The words “sacrifice,” “sacrament,” “altar,” “prayer,” “priest,” and “temple,” are all older than Christianity, and wider than Judaism; but it is in Christianity that they have found their fullest and noblest meaning. Catholicism represents progress. It represents, too, the things that endure. It is not to the antiquaries of the twentieth century that we turn to explain for us the spiritual meaning and power of the Holy Eucharist. Upon this they are not authorities. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,” any more than the man who is destitute of the sensibilities of beauty receives into his being the things of art, or responds to the glory of the starry skies. The Holy Eucharist gives Christ to us, in proportion as we are able to receive Him, as a

present power of spiritual life and perfection; and, in so giving Him, brings us into communion with all who have similarly received Him in the nineteen centuries of Catholicism. In regard to this its continuous and living office, we are not dependent on the discoveries of archaeological research.

Nevertheless, archaeological research has its value when it enables us to distinguish between the things in the Holy Eucharist which Catholicism inherited and the things which it has supplied and developed; and between what we have called its motive of magic, and its motive of spiritual communication and renewal. It is the teaching of the Church that when, in this solemn rite, the priest has pronounced the words of consecration, the substance of the bread and wine is converted into the Body and Blood of Christ. It is hardly necessary to say, however, that the words "body" and "blood" are here used not in a material, but in a transcendent spiritual sense. In the language of popular Catholicism, undoubtedly, as in the language of Protestant sects, there has often been, in reference to the Blood of Christ, a gross, unseemly insistence on carnal images, which is, of course, not Christian but Pagan, and Pagan in a low sense of the word. The effect of these crude conceptions and expressions would, if they had ever stood alone, have been to degrade the spiritual Divinity of Christ to the level of a tribal Totem, and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass to a sort of Mithraic orgy.

It is true that in Jesus Christ, considered on His human side, the lower physical nature, as in the humblest of men, is present, and serves as a basis for the higher. The Body is there with its Blood, and the Spirit rests upon them and governs them; but the higher is nevertheless higher, and the lower lower. When we speak of the Body and Blood of Christ, we cannot be supposed to use these words as we should use them in reference to an ordinary man, or to an animal, or as they would certainly have been used by an

ancient Pagan in reference to his sacrificial rites. The Body and Blood of Christ are Himself. It is the Lord of the world's pure spirits, and all who have entered into His life, whom we receive into our souls in Communion—not flesh, not blood. It is, as the Church teaches, not a bloody sacrifice, but a mystical and symbolic sacrifice—a representative, spiritual sacrifice, not of our Lord only, but of ourselves also, as forming part of His Body—which the priest, as His and our representative, offers up. In such a sacramental sacrifice the idea of magic can have no place. The priest, by the words of consecration, does not change the substance of bread into “flesh” and the substance of wine into “blood”; he changes this substance spiritually and figuratively, according to the co-operating will and intention of the worshipper, into Christ, the ruler of flesh and blood, whose symbol is the Crucifix, and in whose death there is life.

The priest in the Catholic Church, therefore, as he celebrates Mass, is not a mere magician, effecting a sort of alchemic conversion of one inconceivable substance into another. If he had been only this, Catholicism would have had no greater place in the life of mankind than the Mithraism with which the archæologists have sought to identify it. He is an officer of the Christian soul as it follows after spiritual perfection; and when he speaks the words of consecration, Christ becomes really present in the symbolic bread and wine exactly in proportion as He becomes present in the consenting hearts of the faithful, recognizing in these lower things the foundation of the highest things, and beholding in them, when thus consecrated, a sign of that Universal, Indivisible Order, seen and unseen, which is God, and which in Christ summed itself up and became Incarnate as a Personal and Perfect Humanity. It follows from this that the office of the priest in the Catholic Church differs only in degree from that of any other Christian minister who, whether by powers of speech, or by the holiness of

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his own life, or by the celebration of a sacred rite, helps to bring the perfection of Christ into the being of man.

In the sacrament of Holy Order, which is evidently in close connection with the Holy Eucharist, there is, of course, from the point of view of the modern mind, no more a magic effect than in the Eucharist itself, or in Baptism. According to the traditional conception of Holy Order, the priest, as he receives it, receives, amongst other things, the power to work a miracle every time he celebrates Mass—the power, by pronouncing the formula of consecration, to convert the substance of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The modern mind, as we have seen, does not discuss miracles, considered simply as a form of magic. As such it has no interest in them. It regards them as proper to a lapsed state of human culture. It conceives of God as Order, and not as the abrogation or confusion of Order. It recognizes that, as the health of the body rests on the maintenance of right habit, and as its restoration to health, when it has become diseased, depends on the adoption of specific remedial measures, so the soul is kept living in Christ, Who is Perfection, by prayer, worship, meditation, and the regular, practical exercise of a spiritual will. When we have once apprehended the truth that by the Body and Blood of Christ we mean Himself as a Spiritual Presence—and not Himself only, but all who have been one with Him whether they have consciously known Him or not—then the question of what is called the miracle of Transubstantiation, and of the sacrament of Holy Order as connected with it, becomes simply a question of the meaning and use of certain terms. The function of the Catholic priest is to help men to the life in Christ. If a mere objective change—what we have called a magical or thaumaturgic change—in the Eucharistic elements were sufficient for the accomplishment of this end, then, first, the end itself would invariably be accomplished; secondly, the vast apparatus of worship, teaching, and discipline which the Church employs would obviously be

superfluous. But we know that the end is so far from being invariably accomplished that, in spite of the Holy Eucharist and all the immense resources and efforts of Catholicism, the high and pure life in Christ is seldom realized. This, of course, does not prove that the Holy Eucharist is not of supreme importance; it only shows that its effect upon the soul is not an effect of magic, but is just such an effect as Our Lord Himself, in His life, had upon those who came into relation with Him, some of whom were irresistibly attracted to Him by His spiritual beauty and wisdom, while others misunderstood or rejected Him.

From the point of view of the modern mind, therefore—discerning in Catholicism the truths of spiritual reality and use, and drawing them out to their full consequences—what is called the question of “Orders,” the “orders” of the Catholic priesthood, and of the relation of the Church to other Christian bodies, ceases to present a difficulty. Our object in these pages has been, and is, to show that the Catholic Church has a natural, or, in a right positive use of the word, a “supernatural,” power, by conquering the modern religious revolution, to bring in the universality of Christ, and fulfil itself in the life of mankind. To do this, however, it must rise above its own sectarianism—that sectarianism which has shut out from its recognition and sympathy the great non-Christian faiths and the various Christian bodies which are out of communion with it. Catholicism and sectarianism are antithetic. Catholicism certainly does not mean that “Paganism” or Mohammedanism is as good as Christianity, or that either the Greek Church or the Protestant Churches are as good as what, for purposes of distinction, we may call the Church of Rome. The contrary assumption is the one on which we have all along proceeded. The title of Catholicism is sure and great. It does not depend on what it denies to others, but on what it possesses itself. It rests on the plain historic fact that it has presented Christ to the world more continuously and

universally—with more beauty in the region of worship, with more completeness in the region of doctrine, with more fulness and efficacy in the region of organization—than any other Christian body.

The validity of its priesthood and its “orders” follows from this—not from any claim to the exclusive possession of magical powers which may be made in its behalf. The “orders” of the Greek Church, and of other Oriental bodies, are, as we know, “recognized” by Rome—that is to say, it admits in these bodies a power of “magic” similar to its own. The possession of equal magic, however, does not give to the Eastern Church a greatness equal to that of the Western, or prevent it, in traditional language, from being guilty of the sin of schism. The small body of the Old Catholics, again, are commonly understood to possess valid “orders,” but no one would say that they have a religious importance in Christendom comparable, for example, to that of the Anglican Church, whose orders have been disallowed. There is, in fact, something ludicrous in the idea of an isolated Bishop here and there in the world preserving and transmitting the magic of Catholic orders, while actually out of relation with the life of the Catholic Church. When we have recognized that it is not the possession of magic, but the possession of Christ—the confession of Him, the presentation of Him as an Image of Perfection—that gives to a Christian Church its title, then we must allow that even in such a society as that of the Quakers—without a ritual, without sacraments, without a priesthood—Christ, in degree, may be present, as the motive and power of a beautiful spiritual life. The Protestant bodies suffer, not because they do not possess the magic of Apostolic Succession, but because they are shut out from the continuity and universality of Catholicism, or, in other words, from that large and noble working of Christ in Humanity which, in so many ages and nations, has given to the world the ordered spiritual splendour of the Catholic Church.

Quakerism has, in degree, exhibited—and no higher praise could be given to it—some of the distinctive graces of monasticism, but it has possessed them as a tiny sect, and not as the living constituent of a mighty organism.

On the other hand, it is not less true that the Catholic priesthood suffers, and with it the cause of Catholicism, from a claim to the possession of exclusive magical powers, which places it, in proportion to its effect, out of relation with the modern mind. To the modern mind, resting in reality, the priest is the representative organ of a religious society. His function is to consecrate, to teach, to guide, to administer. He is not the Church, but the servant of the Church. The greatest of priests has, as one of the proudest of his titles—*servus servorum Dei*. That is a scientific description. In the discharge of his various functions the priest is what he is, and works according to his personal capacity. If he is, as he often undoubtedly is, uncharitable, intolerant, unintelligent, ignorant—out of relation with the great minds and great interests of Humanity—then the magic of his orders no more preserves him from the consequences of these defects than it would preserve him from the consequences of disease, insanity, or licentiousness. The need of the world now is that sectarianism, in all its forms, should disappear, and that Catholicism—the universality of the living Christ, penetrating and ordering all culture, and realizing itself in the life of man, should reign in its stead. This, however, must remain impossible so long as the modern mind, with its six centuries of irreversible experiences and acquisitions, is outside the circle of the Church, and the Church, with its precious spiritual possessions, is outside the circle of the modern mind. When the Church rests in its true power—which is the power, not of magic, but of the spiritual perfection of Christ, working by persuasion and illumination—then it will be on common ground with positive science, which, in its own sphere, and for its own ends, works by a precisely similar process.

CHAPTER XX

THE PAPACY

THE two great representative creations and instruments of Catholicism are, in the region of worship, the Mass, and, in the region of organization, the Papacy.

The Papacy
in the
Modern
World.

These two creations are in close connection. Sometimes, by way of reproach, the Protestant sectary calls the Catholic a "Papist." There is really no reproach in the term. It is a title of honour. The Catholic is a Papist because he is a Catholic, and he is a Catholic because his aim is to bring in the universality of Jesus Christ. The bringing in of Christ, as a power of perfection into the life of man, has, as we have seen, called into being the visible and organic Church. We are not under an obligation to discuss the question of whether the rise of this Church, as the voice and arm of Christ, was actually inevitable. That question may be looked upon as sociologically and historically decided. Wherever men have entered into relations of permanent convergence and co-operation, for whatever purpose, they have had to set up some kind of order and rule. This is true even of our English Dissenting bodies. The most loosely-organized amongst them still has its system of government and policy, such as it is. The Papacy must be judged in relation to the central, practical aim of Catholicism, which, in all its ages, has been to make Jesus Christ the Lord of the world, and to bind together in Him all the various nations of mankind. "The one fold, the one shepherd"—that is the eternal principle of the Papacy, which, therefore,

deserves to be regarded as the greatest of all human institutions. In presence of the commanding ideal which it represents, the distinctive shibboleths of all our Protestant bodies and revolutionary societies, of whatever kind, sink into insignificance.

The Papacy is so far from having lost its meaning in the modern world, and to the modern mind—the synthetic mind of a mature Humanity, holding and pursuing the things of Catholicism—that it has come to possess, amidst the developments of the present time, an importance infinitely greater than it ever had before. The world in the twentieth century is one world. Races and nations which, less than a hundred years ago, knew almost nothing of one another, are now separated by only a few weeks of travel, and by a few minutes of telegraphy. In the Middle Ages men of all European countries were gathered together in the schools of Paris—but in the twentieth century Hindus, Negroes, Egyptians, Japanese and Siamese are to be found listening to the same lectures in English colleges, side by side with our own students. The ceaseless, boundless movement of Humanity through the ages has wrought this miracle. Therefore, if Christ, in accordance with the great dream of Catholicism, is really to reign in the world, and atheism is not to dismiss Him, the Papacy, which is the coping-stone of His social temple, has now a prospect and hope opened up to it vaster and nobler than it has ever known. The modern religious revolution, which, in its ultimate form, is atheism, commenced with the rejection of the Papacy; it will end by its recovery. The rejection of the Papacy was not a thing which the Reformation, to begin with, proposed to itself. It came as one of the consequences of a conflict which the Papacy itself provoked. It was, we must remember, the Catholic Church which, by an evil policy, produced the evil thing that we call Protestantism. It is the Catholic Church, pursuing exactly the same policy as provoked the Reformation—and as ecclesiastical authority outside the Catholic Church has so often

pursued—which is to-day helping to widen the bounds of the religious revolution. Against this revolution it has only one resource—culture, synthesis, the mind of a developed Humanity, looking back upon its past, and giving to the enduring truths of that past the illumination and completeness of a fuller experience. In a word, if the Catholic Church, which, as we say, has a natural power to end the revolution, and bring in the universality of Christ, wishes to accept this great task, and not simply to increase a disorder which it has helped to create, then it must understand how to learn and develop.

It may, after this, seem a paradoxical and inconsistent thing to say, what is nevertheless in substance true, that the Catholic Church has always been right—whether as against the various sects of the first Christian centuries, or as against the Greek Church, or as against Protestantism, or as against the modern revolution. It has been right because the great principles and interests which it has maintained have been, in their positive significance, of high and permanent importance in the life of Humanity. Where it has been wrong—where, that is to say, it has had the expanding, progressive mind of Humanity palpably against it—is in the arguments and methods by which it has upheld them. It has been right in refusing to surrender great conceptions and institutions at the bidding of a negative and irresponsible criticism; it has been wrong, and is still wrong, in not recognizing that these great conceptions and institutions can only live by living with the mind and life of man, and that to give them security and development they must be brought constantly into the light of advancing culture. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” This is the word for modern Catholicism, as it was the word for the ancient Thessalonians. The Catholic Church must remember that it now exists and works in the modern world—that world which is both old and new—and that it is to the modern mind, which, in the plenitude of its power,

The Strength
and Weak-
ness of the
Church.

and in so far as it continues Catholic, and proceeds on a principle of reasonable faith, is certainly sovereign—that it is called upon to plead. It is in the region of proof—that is to say, in the determination of the scientific meaning and practical use of things—that the modern mind, victorious in a hundred fields, has its seat of authority.

Our first reason for accepting the Papacy—as for accepting any of the great things of Catholicism—is what we

The Purpose
of the
Papacy. have called a reason of faith. Here, as elsewhere,
our ultimate appeal must be to the mind of
Humanity. If we rest in human experience,

as, scientifically, we are bound to do, then it is rational to suppose that the men who, age after age, and in every country of Western Europe, have been working at the tasks of Jesus Christ—in other words, at ordering the spiritual life of man—have, by the exigencies of practice, been carried, in degree at least, into the modes of fulfilment and organization which these tasks have required. There is no scientific presumption in favour of the Protestant and revolutionary critics of the Papacy, however eminent they may be; the scientific presumption is in favour of the Papists. But the claim of the Papacy does not depend upon presumption alone; it depends upon the right reason of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is a universal principle. He gathers the souls of the world into a single community. That community is the Catholic Church—a consensus, a co-operation, a continuous and indivisible whole. The Church, in the complete conception of it, is an international society. In the Middle Ages it was, within the bounds of Western Europe at least, actually this; in its ideal extension it is this without any limits at all, save those of our planet itself. There is, therefore, nothing artificial or arbitrary in the Papacy. The Pope has the same relation to the universal company of believers that a monarch, or the President of a Republic, has, in theory, to the State of which he is the head.

The Pope, indeed, has a sounder and better title, and

stands for a nobler ideal, than any monarch or President who ever lived. He represents—in principle and prophetically at least—what in modern language we call the solidarity and continuity of mankind. He represents these things in virtue of the fact that the Church is a spiritual society, without limits in space or time. Jesus Christ, of whom the Church is the voice and organ, is a universal principle because He is a spiritual principle. We may, if we please, use one plain and simple word, and say that He is the principle of Goodness—Goodness as a passion of the heart, Goodness as a conception of the mind, Goodness as the exercise of a religious will, resting on the rule of the spirit. We may also, if we please, use a perfectly equivalent word, and say that He is Divine. Whichever word we use to express our meaning, the truth remains that it is not by an accident, but of necessity, that those who have worked at the universal tasks of Christ have, in the region of life and organization, brought the Papacy into being, just as, in the region of worship, they have brought the Mass into being. These two related creations of Catholic wisdom have had exactly the same end to accomplish—the fulfilment of the soul's life in Christ. This end, the end of the universal Church, naturally transcends any ends narrower in scope than itself. It transcends, therefore, the ends of family, city, nation, and empire; and when these partial and local ends come into collision, or seem to come into collision, with the universal ends of the Church—which are the ends of the whole of Humanity—it is the partial and local ends, and not the universal ends, which ought to give way. In other words, if the life in Christ is the law of human perfection, it is a law for the family or the nation, not less than for the individual soul. Up to the present, as we know, this law has not been fulfilled. There has been one standard of conduct for the individual man, and another for collective man. Instead of subordinating politics to morals, we have subordinated, and still subordinate, morals to politics. The Papacy, in the ideal con-

ception of it, represents the subordination of politics to morals. It represents the predominance of the spiritual power over the temporal, of the universal over the local, of the permanent over the transitory, of the rule of love and directing reason over shortsightedness and passion. The Pope is not the Bishop of Rome only; he is the Bishop of the world. He speaks—or he will speak, when the true day of Catholicism has come—as a Father to a universal brotherhood.

It is from this point of view that we are naturally led to consider that question which, for so many years, has, to the critics of Catholicism, and even to many Catholics, been a cause of difficulty—the question of Papal Infallibility. To this question, also, we may apply the double principle which we have now so often had to invoke—the principle of a reasonable faith, on the one hand, the principle of demonstration on the other. By faith we know that the Catholic Church—so great a custodian of the religious mind of Humanity, so noble an organization of the spiritual life—is, in its central, cardinal affirmations, always right. We begin, then, by accepting from the Church the principle of infallibility, as a principle which the modern mind cannot subvert, but which it has, in so far as it accepts it, a natural title to elucidate and develop. In other words, when we approach the consideration of the great dogma of infallibility, it is reasonable for us to recognize that the presumption is in favour of the Church which affirms it, and not in favour of the critics who deny it. We are indulging in no perilous paradox when we say that the Church knows its own business—understands the relation of its means to its ends—better than those can do who have never proposed those ends to themselves, and gained the experience and insight which their continuous prosecution has naturally brought with it.

The task of the Catholic Church is, once more, to bring the perfection of Christ into the life of man. In this it is on

common ground with even the smallest and most obscure of Protestant sects. Catholicism only differs from any form of

The Principle of Infallibility. Protestantism, on its positive side, in scale and degree—by the greater universality, continuity, completeness, power, and beauty, with which it has pursued this general purpose of Christianity. If, therefore, Papal Infallibility is, as we begin by assuming it to be, a sound principle, it must be capable of being shown to be sound in Christ, and in reference to that universal presentation of Christ to the world which is the great distinctive aim of Catholicism. We may say simply that it is sound if it helps the cause of Christ, unsound if it does not. We may say this because the Church itself would not repudiate such a criterion. Now here, as elsewhere, of course, we are not concerned with words but with things—not with the mere term “infallibility,” but with what it actually stands for in the transactions of human life. By the Vatican Council of 1870 the Pope, speaking *ex cathedra*, as the supreme voice and organ of the whole Church, and on questions of faith and morals, was declared to be an infallible authority. By “infallible” we mean incapable of error. The decisions of the Popes, therefore, under certain conditions, and in reference to certain specific subjects, are, according to the decree of the Council, to be accepted as an expression of truth. It is clear, however, that a Council of the Catholic Church, high and just as may be its authority, is a Council of that Church only—that it does not speak for Christendom, and still less for the vast non-Christian communities of the world. The Vatican decrees have, as we know, not been accepted by the Greek Church, or by the Anglican, Lutheran, and Presbyterian bodies, or by our English Dissenting sects. To these communities, therefore, the Pope is not infallible, and his decisions on faith and morals are not necessarily an expression of truth.

Here, again, we must come back to the principle on which we have throughout insisted—that it is not the claim which

a Church makes for itself that is really important, but the degree in which that claim is actually accepted and ratified by Humanity, in the high plane of its intelligence and development. By truth, as we have already seen, we cannot, for practical purposes, mean anything else than the universal, continuous, and progressive affirmations of Humanity, in the various categories of experience and culture. A Catholic is one who holds that the Catholic Church possesses complete and certain truth within the sphere of religion—that it presents and realizes Jesus Christ in the world with more fidelity and power than any other body. Religious truth is, therefore, to a Catholic, synonymous with the beliefs of the Church; and what the beliefs of the Church are it is for an Œcumenical Council, representing the whole body of the faithful, to authoritatively declare. The decrees of such a Council do, as a matter of fact, in so far as they are not repudiated, stand for the “truth” of Catholicism—or, in other words, for what the Church universally and continuously holds to be true. We cannot speak of “truth” as if it were a sort of objective entity, external to the mind of man. The word “truth” is a general term, which only becomes positively intelligible when it is resolved into a number of specific statements of relation. The statements of relation with which the Catholic Church is particularly concerned are statements bearing upon our conception of Jesus Christ, and upon the realization of His life in the life of man.

Now, it is clear that with reference to such subjects an Œcumenical Council has, for the purposes of Catholicism, a natural infallibility. The discernment and affirmation of truth being a function of the human mind, and an Œcumenical Council being an ultimate organ of the human mind relatively to Catholicism, its decisions—so long as they are universally accepted within the sphere of its authority—must be held to be true. Such a Council, in a word, is, under such circumstances, infallible. Being

thus infallible, it has, of course, a natural power of decreeing the infallibility of the Pope, and of delegating to him, as the elected representative of the whole Church, the exercise of what may be called the office or function of infallibility. The Pope, therefore, derives his infallibility from the consent of the Church, expressed through the vote of a Council. He is the ultimate voice of truth, for the purposes of Catholicism, because he is the voice of the Church. That, we must suppose, is the meaning of St. Augustine's words which have so often been quoted: *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*, the "orbis terrarum," in this instance, being not that vast body of Humanity of which the Catholic Church is only a constituent, but the lesser body of the Catholic faithful. We come, in fact, to the somewhat prosaic and obvious conclusion that the Pope is actually and in practice infallible to those who believe him to be infallible. We reach substantially the same conclusion if we say not that the Pope is infallible because he is the voice of the Church, but that he is infallible because he is the voice of God. The word "God," as we have already seen, stands not for any one external fact, or particular complex of external facts, which we behold with the physical eye, but for a synthetic and symbolical conception of the human mind, representing all experience, outer and inner. Consequently when the Pope speaks as the voice of the Church, he necessarily also speaks as the voice of God, according to that conception of God which Catholicism continuously acknowledges.

In the dogma of Papal Infallibility, so viewed, there is nothing repugnant to reason. It represents, as all the great doctrines of the Church represent, a positive principle, which we may properly accept by presumption, or faith, but which admits of being brought within the sphere of demonstration. This principle it is an office of the modern mind to secure and develop. It is evident that in affirming the infallibility of the Pope, the Vatican Council only gave

Infallibility
and
Finality.

abstract and formal expression to a relation between Catholics and the Head of their Church which had, in fact, existed for ages. The decrees of Councils, as Cardinal Newman has so well insisted, are not suddenly and arbitrarily sprung upon an unprepared world. They come after centuries of experience and discussion, and they are the immediate result of a debate and a vote. In all this there is no magic. Magic does not work by such processes. The formal definition of Papal Infallibility was the work of a legislative assembly which, if it had the title to decide that the Pope was infallible, had necessarily also the title to decide that he was not. In declaring him infallible, it simply, for certain purposes, appointed him as its delegate, and invested him with its own powers. In other words, it provided by statute that the final judgment of the Church on uncertain or disputed questions of faith and morals should be given by a representative, responsible, personal organ, instead of by the majority of a Council.

The word "infallible" is only the ecclesiastical equivalent of the word "ultimate." Every organized society, whatever the purposes it exists to promote, recognizes some ultimate authority or arbiter, whose decisions, for the time being, are final. The relations between our House of Commons and its Speaker are, within their limits, substantially the same as those existing between an Œcumenical Council and the Pope; as also are the relations between Parliament and the Courts of Law to which it entrusts the practical interpretation and enforcement of its own Acts. We do not formally pronounce a Court of Appeal "infallible," but we accept its judgments as final, even in matters of life and death; and we do so on the assumption that they will be in accordance with justice, or "truth." We cannot of course, even in the case of a supreme Court of Appeal, possess an absolute immunity from error. It is always possible that in any given instance its decisions may be mistaken—that they may be wrong in fact or

in judgment. An absolute immunity from error we cannot have; we must content ourselves with a relative immunity. We do our best to secure that the judges of a supreme court shall be men of capacity, training, maturity and special experience, and, further, that they shall be incorrupt, independent, and impartial. There is, too, even from the decision of a supreme Court, a power of appeal, in exceptional cases, to an authority still greater—the authority of what we call public opinion. A Court of Law is only the organ of the society which has created it. In that society there is a natural, indefeasible right, which in extreme cases is exercised, of controlling or reversing the action of its own instruments. Here we have another of those apparent paradoxes or contradictions which, as we have said, sit so easily upon the human spirit. Common sense tells us that in a Court of Law we require special capacity, knowledge, and independence, and yet not only, in certain grave and urgent cases, do we appeal from this learned tribunal to the common sense of the whole community, but we recognize that the best interests of justice itself require that this untrained mind of the social mass should exercise a vigilant guardianship over all its special authorities. Justice is a universal human need, and not the exclusive concern of a body of experts.

What is true of a judge in a supreme Court of Appeal is true of the Pope. He derives his office and title from the Church. He is “infallible”—that is to say, he gives the ultimate decision in questions of faith and morals, for the practical purposes of Catholicism—because the Church, through a representative Council, has chosen him to be its organ, and declared him, as such, infallible. The Pope, moreover, is the elected minister of the Church. He owes his position to a vote of the College of Cardinals. He is always—in our modern world at least—a man of capacity, probity, training, and long experience; and he is chosen by men who, in these respects, are his peers. In the actual administration of his office he

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Exercise of
Infallibility.

does not stand alone, and "do as he pleases." He is subject to certain traditions and usages. He is surrounded by a vast network of governing authorities. He is in constant consultation with others. He works in the light of public opinion—the public opinion, not of the Catholic Church alone, but of the critical, censorious world beyond it. The actual exercise of his "infallibility" is limited to a special order of questions. It is, in fact, of extreme rarity. We cannot conceive of it as being called into operation suddenly and arbitrarily, without such a full discussion and inquiry as would, in effect, render it a mature, considered judgment of the Church itself. The late Cardinal Vaughan, speaking of his immediate predecessor in the Archbishopric of Westminster, Cardinal Manning, said that during the last years of his life he suffered from "senile decay." It is obvious that a Pope also may suffer from "senile decay," or from personal inability of whatever kind, and that, if he does, the discharge of his office, including the exercise of his "infallibility," must, in so far as it actually depends upon him, be seriously affected by it, since either his office will be ill-performed, or he will come under the influence of men of more intellectual vigour than himself, who will really wield his powers, without having the public responsibility which should attach to them. Even in such a situation, however—which is undoubtedly full of danger for the Church—we may be sure that, in practice, everything possible will be done to prevent the Papacy, either in the exercise of infallibility or in other respects, from falling into open discredit, or from coming into violent collision with public opinion.

The exercise of Papal Infallibility is, in short, the judicial office of an ultimate social authority; and, like any other such office, it depends for its value partly upon the degree in which it actually subserves a public need, partly upon the personal capacity of the man who discharges it, and partly upon the vigorous, vigilant citizenship of those in whose interests it exists. It follows that the decisions of

infallibility are necessarily amenable to the progressive movement of the human mind, and are subject to revision. Neither an Œcumenical Council nor a Pope is, strictly speaking, a teaching authority. Their function is practical. The Council is a legislative authority; the Pope is a declaratory and administrative authority. He is a supreme spiritual ruler, who rules by the consent of the whole body of the faithful. He is this in fact, and according to the interpretations of social science, whatever may be the ecclesiastical language employed to explain the source of his authority, or to define his functions. It is a very certain thing, therefore, that the practical exercise of "infallibility"—that is to say, of the final declaratory office vested, for certain specific purposes, in the Pope—not only ought to be, but actually is, in close dependence upon the living, moving mind of the Church, which is the living, moving mind of a developing Humanity. It is not possible, by any measures of repression or exclusion, to permanently prevent this relation of dependence from producing its due consequences. This was impossible even six hundred years ago; still more is it impossible now, when at every moment, and from every civilized people in the world, and from every field of culture, the light of the mind of man is streaming in upon the Church.

By the definition of Papal Infallibility it is limited to questions of faith and morals, and does not bear upon matters of fact, or upon history, or upon science, except in so far as these may be judged to come within the scope of doctrine. The modern mind, however, recognizes no such separation between one province of knowledge and another. The modern mind—always distinguishing between this mind and the revolutionary mind—is synthetic. It is fully Catholic, and where explanation is concerned it is sovereign. Questions of faith or doctrine are questions of man's apprehension of the Universal Order, which is God; questions of morals are questions of man's feeling and action, as a moral being, in dependence upon that Order, and in special

relation to the social state. Neither the one class of questions nor the other will the modern mind consent to dismiss from the field of science. It brings within that field, as we have seen, the Church and the Papacy themselves ; and in doing so, gives to them a force and authority which at present they lack. Consequently, the "truth" of Catholicism—that practical consensus of the Church which it is the office of "infallibility" to declare—must be the progressive and enlarging truth of Pascal's man, ever living and ever learning, and, as he lives and learns, correcting and completing his view of himself, of the world without him, and of God, Who, because He comprehends all things, is Himself incomprehensible. It is a truth always changing, yet, in the words of the Catholic Church, always the same—as is a human being who, advancing from childhood to old age, yet, as he so advances, preserves his fundamental identity unimpaired. The Church, similarly, is always the same, because it is the Church of Christ, and is Catholic ; and it is always changing, because as it fulfils Christ, and becomes more Catholic, it grows in knowledge and power, and is infallible, not with the barren fixity of mere verbal abstractions, but with the expansion of a living mind, moving towards the completeness of God.

We see, then, first, that the Papacy is not an accident, or passing phase, of Catholicism, but is the organic co-ordinating centre of the Church, as it brings the

<p>The Temporal Power of the Pope.</p>	<p>Perfection of Christ into the life of mankind ; secondly, that the Pope, deriving his office and power from the Church, as undoubtedly he does, is rightly declared to be its "infallible" or ultimate voice, in natural dependence upon the inevitable and constant enlargement of the human mind. It is because the Papacy exercises, and properly exercises, these high functions that the question of what is called the Temporal Power of the Pope has become of such far-reaching importance. The expression "temporal power" is, it must be confessed, in</p>
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itself misleading and unfortunate. It confuses the issue. It is clear that, in the strict sense of the word, the Pope ought to possess no temporal power at all. He is the supreme representative of the Spiritual Power. He is the Vicar of Christ. As such, he must work by the spirit. In so far as he does not so work, he is false to his mission. If anything is certain in Christianity, it is certain that the whole significance of Jesus Christ is missed if we regard Him as a representative of the Temporal Power, of which He is rather a sanction and consecration. The symbol of Jesus Christ, and of the way in which He has worked in the religious heart of Humanity, is the Crucifix. If, therefore, the Pope is ever tempted to regard himself as a Temporal Power, he should look at the Crucifix. "A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him." We may perhaps say of the Pope that either he ought to possess all temporal power, or to possess none—that either the government of the world should be in his hands, as a universal Emperor and Vicerent of God, or he should be content to be as Christ was, a spirit, speaking to the spirit, and ruling, in so far as he rules at all, by the consent of the religious heart. The fundamental difference between the Spiritual Power and the Temporal is that the one works by persuasion and education, the other by command and enforcement. The ultimate symbol of the Church is Christ upon the Cross; the ultimate symbol of the punitive State, as such, is the criminal upon the gallows. It is the characteristic office of the Church so to prevail upon the nature of man as to prevent crime from existing; it is the characteristic office of the State, in this connection, to punish the criminal. The Church especially appeals to the motive of spiritual love; the State especially appeals to the motive of physical fear. This distinction is none the less fundamental and valid, because, in the complications of practice, the line of demarcation between the two Powers is often obscured, the State apparently working with the motives of the Church, and

the Church abandoning its proper methods, and grasping at the arms of the State.

While, however, it is true that the words "temporal power" in relation to the Papacy are misleading, since they suggest exactly the kind of power which it ought never to possess, and which, in so far as it has possessed it, has brought upon it discredit and weakness—still, beneath these words, as beneath all the great words of the Church, there lies a truth, and a truth which is certainly of high importance. What the Pope needs is not temporal power, but temporal independence. He needs this for the right exercise of his function. That function is unique. There can, properly speaking, be but one Pope. His office is international and universal. It is the greatest office on earth, for it is the office of one who, by speaking the word of Christ, is called upon to bring all the peoples of the world into alliance, and to make of each of them an element in the spiritual concord of Humanity. In order that the Pope may rightly discharge this international co-ordinating office, two conditions are indispensable—first, that he should abandon all claim to temporal power, in the true sense of these words; second, that he should occupy a position of temporal or political freedom. As he is called upon, by the nature of his position, to exercise spiritual authority in every nation, and to offer religious counsels to every Government, he ought not to be the subject of any one State, but should be so situated that he can speak to the world with fearlessness and disinterestedness.

The office of the Vicar of Christ is, it is true, one which is in itself so sacred and august that even under the most unfavourable circumstances—assuming it to be discharged with wisdom and equity—it must command the respect of mankind. The Pope is now an Italian subject, and he is often alluded to as the "prisoner of the Vatican," yet it cannot be said that his right spiritual influence in the world—even the non-Catholic world—is less than that which has been exercised by many Popes who, besides being Supreme

Pontiffs, have possessed the political and military state of a petty Principality. It is, as we may say, by a beneficent Providence that the Papacy has been stripped of temporal possessions which, in proportion to their extent, diverted it from its true aims, involved it in unseemly ambitions and complications, and hindered it in the discharge of that universal spiritual office, the right fulfilment of which is its one title to exist. The true majesty of the Pope is that of the chosen lord of the wide realm of Catholicism. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the full dignity and efficiency of the Papal office require that the Pope, precisely because he is *servus servorum Dei*, and derives his title from the consent of the Catholic world, should be secured in a domain which to men of every nation may be a common spiritual centre and sanctuary, and which lies outside the jurisdiction of any particular State. It ought not to be impossible, by an international compact on the part of all countries which value the institution of the Papacy, to maintain for him such a situation.

In theory, of course, the Papacy need not be seated at Rome. Rome is where the Vicar of Christ is, who is also the voice of a religious Humanity ; and in the one undivided world which modern science and energy have created the Head of the universal Church could speak to mankind, in a few hours, from America or Australia as well as from Italy. Rome, however, holds an incomparable position. It is the eternal city. It has been the double centre of European order and progress—first of the Western Empire, which was the mother of our modern Western nations ; secondly, of the noble spiritual community which succeeded to it, and in which those nations became one. Such a city, which has been the centre of the great Catholic Order of the past, may well be the centre of the wider Catholic Order of the future—that order which will hold within its universal comprehensiveness the East as well as the West, the new world as well as the old. We may say, if we will, as some say, that such a universal Catholicism is a vision, and

a vision destined never to be fulfilled. We may hold that Jesus Christ is a force that is spent, and that an organic Catholicism, with the Papacy as its centre and head, is a thing of the Middle Ages. If, however, we are believers in a developed and completed Catholicism, as the universal fulfilment of Christ in the life of man, then we must be believers in the Papacy as its supreme voice and symbol, and in Rome—the city of the great Republic, of the great Empire, of the great Church, and of that New Learning which was the opening of the modern mind—as the spiritual capital of human unity and continuity. It is not too much to hope that in that august city a greater Pope than any the world has known will yet arise, as the representative, directing mind of a greater Catholicism.

CHAPTER XXI

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

To the writer of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians the Kingdom of Heaven was a magic realm in the sky, from which the Lord was soon suddenly to descend "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," summoning the living and the dead to be "caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Almost nineteen hundred years have passed away since these apocalyptic words were written, and man is still laboriously, painfully working upon the earth at his appointed task, which is that of establishing the Kingdom of Heaven—the Kingdom of Christ, the Prince of purity, love, and spiritual peace—within his own soul, and in that outer social life of intelligence and action which proceeds from the soul and fulfils it. This task man has not chosen, any more than he has chosen to move round the sun upon his planet, or that the moon and the stars should rain down their glory upon him in the night, or that the earth should bring forth fruits to feed him, or that he should be haunted by a vision of human perfection, or that beauty should be beautiful or goodness good. This task has been assigned to him by God—by that mysterious, irresistible, incomprehensible Power of all things, that governing, vitalizing, awful Order, outer and inner, in which, now as ever before, question it and name it as he will, he lives and moves and has his being. This is what, in its own way, is said by modern science, examining and analyzing this Order, and representing it in

formal terms of measurement and law; this is what, in nobler terms of beauty and song, was said of old by the Psalmist: "*For He is the Lord our God: and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.*" Nineteen hundred years ago the men to whom the writer of the Epistle to the Thessalonians addressed himself began this great task—the task of establishing the Kingdom of Christ in the inner soul and outer life of Humanity; and, so far as we may permit ourselves to form a forecast of the human future, nineteen hundred years hence, or nineteen thousand years hence, or a hundred thousand years hence, men will still be living under the law of God upon earth, not choosing their tasks, which are appointed for them, and not by them, but choosing what they have the power to choose—whether to neglect them and be false to them, or to pursue them, with enlightened submission and active will, to the accomplishment of a Divine Perfection.

But there is a difference between man as he was when the Epistle to the Thessalonians was written and man as he is in the twentieth century. The Christian contemporaries of St. Paul did spontaneously, unconsciously, and indirectly what the modern man does deliberately, and under the full play of a heightened and developed consciousness. The first Christians were not Catholics. They had not the sense of universality. They had certainly the Image of Christ in their minds. He was to them, moreover, as He is to all Christians now, the type of Perfect Goodness; and they knew that they must correspond to Him in goodness if they were to be "ever with the Lord." But of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, which is the Catholic Church; of calling all Humanity to Christ; of working for a distant human future; of building noble temples to God which should require centuries of human effort to erect, and which, when erected, should endure for a thousand years—of all this they had no conception. They were governed, to a great extent, by what we have called the idea of magic—that idea

Man as a
Spiritual
Artist.

of sudden, inexplicable changes and transformations which has always clung to the Christian mind, and set its stamp on Christian speech, but which, during the nineteen hundred years in which Catholicism has laboured at its practical tasks, has been slowly, surely, inevitably spending its force. In so far as they—and the generations of Christians who have succeeded to them—have been governed by this idea they have necessarily had an imperfect and confused conception, not only of the Universal Order, and of man in relation to it, but of the great task of Catholicism itself.

The modern man, the heir of the ancient and medieval worlds, is gaining a full apprehension of this task. He holds the Divine Christ in his heart, but he holds Him in relation to all the irreversible experiences and acquisitions which enter into a culture developed and synthetic. The modern man is a complete man. He is Catholic. He has measured and conquered his earth. He has escaped from the limitations of nation and race and sect, and gained the sense of an indivisible and continuous Humanity. He has opened up the universe, and sees now where and what is his own planet, his appointed home, as it pursues its way in space. He has written the history of Humanity itself, and beholds its vast unfolding through the ages. He has learnt to look in upon his own soul with the self-consciousness of a scrutinizing discernment, so that even his emotions, thoughts, volitions, and speech, have been brought within the categories of science. He knows what it is that he can know, and what it is that he cannot know; where science ends, and mystery begins; where action is possible, and where a reasoned resignation is called for. With this developed consciousness and with this synthetic culture, the modern man is able to do what the men addressed in the Epistle to the Thessalonians could not do, what throughout the whole history of Humanity has hitherto been impossible—form a full and settled conception of the human future. Man is now as an artist, who not only sees

in his mind the picture which he has to paint, but possesses the materials, methods, and power with which to paint it.

The picture which man has to paint is the Kingdom of Heaven. We may use one short and pregnant word, and say it is Christ. This world is to become the abode of Christ, stamped from end to end with His Perfection. The modern mind, because it is a synthetic, unifying mind—in other words, because it is completely Catholic—cannot speak of Heaven and earth, or natural and supernatural, or Divine and human, or “this world” and the “next,” as if they were antithetic and antagonistic conceptions. To the modern mind the word “God” does not represent a blank negation of all experience, outer and inner, but is, as we have said, the word which sums up all the things of experience, become incarnate in the personal, representative Humanity of Christ. The modern man, therefore—who, in his fundamental nature, is the same as the medieval and the ancient man, in spite of the differences between them, and is not, as some have supposed, separated from his former self by impassable gulfs or stages—does not, as we have throughout insisted, discard his old symbolic words and conceptions. They are his. He knows what they mean. He explains them. He possesses and uses them more fully and certainly than they were ever possessed and used before. They are not the property of an exclusive sect, holding and monopolizing a secret key to them. They are the creation of the religious mind of Humanity, and in the mind of Humanity become complete, and containing all its past in its present consciousness, they properly find interpretation and development.

The modern man, consequently, sees the Kingdom of Heaven as a Kingdom of Christ's perfection, to be established upon this earth, where God has decreed that man should dwell—where, nineteen hundred years ago, he began consciously to work in the light of Christ, and where, so far as we can foresee the future, nineteen thousand years hence he will be working in it still. The modern man declines to

sacrifice the substance to the shadow, the known to the unknown, the certain to the uncertain, the sure to the doubtful, the good of the human whole to the exorbitant desires of the individual man. Like the religious Israelite of old, he is content to do the will of God where it is given to him to do it, without stipulating that nothing less than boundless felicity in an endless celestial Elysium shall be granted to him as his reward. To the modern man the Divine Perfection of Christ, the beauty of the Poem of God, and the spiritual order of the Catholic Church, are none the less the eternal things of the soul because the old idea of sudden catastrophes and magical transformations has given place to the idea of law; because we no longer expect the Lord to come "with a shout," or that we shall meet Him "in the air," proclaiming the end of all things with the sound of a trumpet; or because we cannot now think of the "future life," or the "next world," as, on the one hand, a flaming pit in which the resurrected bodies of the wicked are to be eternally tortured, and as, on the other, an unimaginable Paradise in the sky, somehow substituting itself for an annihilated universe, in which the souls of the good are to enjoy an endless felicity.

To these simple, primitive conceptions the modern mind does not turn back with contempt—first, because it sees in them the symbolic and poetic expressions of positive truths; secondly, because to the modern mind, as it looks out upon the external universe and in upon itself, this measureless Whole, which to objective science is an Infinite Order and which to the religious soul is God, is now, as to the men who shaped these conceptions, a fathomless mystery, and because the sense of it as a mystery is as much a part of our real experience as is our knowledge of it as law. To the true student of Humanity what we now call myths, legends, miracles, utopias, and apocalyptic visions, are, equally with the creations of the arts and the explanations of science, a part of man's revelation of himself, in his emotional and imaginative relation to the seen and the

unseen, and are a fuller expression of his spirit than is the mere objective analysis of outward phenomena. Nevertheless, it remains true that it is in the Perfection of Christ, Whom we know, and in the Poems which paint Him for us, and in Catholicism, which has brought the life of the world into increasing correspondence with Him, and in the synthetic culture of the modern mind, interpreting and developing Catholicism, that the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the Catholic Church become complete and universal—or, in other words, become a unified, religious Humanity—will find its sure foundations.

The life of man become, within and without, completely Catholic will be based, as the religious life has always been, upon worship. It will be this because it will be a conscious, deliberate, but increasingly spontaneous realization of the transcendent, unfolding Perfection of Christ. Man, the artist of his own destiny, in dependence on the law of God, must ever, in worship, renew in himself the vision of himself, raised above himself, and exalted into the supernatural and Divine. In worship we commemorate great things, come into communion with them, receive them into our souls, and prepare ourselves for giving them forth again in life. When we enter the Church we enter Heaven, and there we learn how to make a Heaven of earth. “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” says the Lord’s Prayer—that simple, profound, and prophetic symbol which has so naturally been given a central place in the Mass. In the Church we have the vision and the joy of perfection—such a vision and such a joy as come to a great poet when, looking out on sea or land, he beholds, what yet is never there except when the poet looks—a consecration and dream of spiritual beauty.

To many minds it seems that the hours spent in worship are wasted, yet worship, when it is complete, does for us, in its own high and pure domain, exactly what is done for us, in their respective spheres, by the arts, which are

Life in
Worship.

commonly insisted upon as aids to culture. The revolutionary and critical mind thinks it an excellent thing to spend hours in reading a poem or a work of fiction, or in listening to music, or in watching a drama, or in looking at pictures and sculptures, or even in admiring architectural masterpieces which the genius of worship has created ; and yet it is always to the inner life—and sometimes to an inner life of mere sensuous sensitiveness and pleasure—that the arts, bodying forth beautiful internal images of speech and sound and form, make their appeal. To such a mind the nun in her cloister, communing with Christ, and educating her heart in holy love, is an object of contempt, while the man of the music-hall or the crowd at a football match stands in no need of justification.

The Catholic man—that man who, as we cannot doubt, is being prepared amidst the uncertainties, strife, and waste

The
Catholic
Temple. of the present time—will disparage no art, or science, or wholesome pleasure, but he will gain the inspiration and power of a total Humanity before the altar of Christ. In a Catholic Church, during the celebration of High Mass, we may find, even now, what we can find nowhere else in the world—a synthesis, in forms of spiritual symbolism, of the life, mind, visions, powers, culture, and achievements of a progressive Humanity, as it has advanced from age to age, in its sublime, unending quest for perfection. In the building itself—especially if it is one of those wonderful medieval shrines such as, in England, Protestantism has appropriated to its own purposes, but which it has been powerless to create—we have a monument to the Divine Christ, on which the spirit of goodness, co-operating with the spirit of beauty, has stamped the harmony and will of worship. Upon its massive, enduring foundations, upon its stately strength, upon its delicate grace, upon its ordered abundance, upon its noble severity, upon the vastness of its solemn spaces, upon the poetic refinement of its outlines, upon the images in its windows vivified by the light of Heaven, there rests the

consecration of unnumbered souls—of the genius that conceived the structure, adoring God; of the forgotten labourers who obscurely wrought at it; of the saint whose relics are enshrined in it; of the faithful priests who have ministered in it; of the countless devout men and women who, in that visible temple of the Divine, have bowed the knee to an invisible glory. In this great edifice, moreover—proving, if such a proof were needed, that the highest motive of genius is the love of God—we have no sudden erection called into being by an enchanter's word, but a slow creation of the developing mind of Humanity; for, although the seal of Christ is set upon it, and it is a Church of the Cross, it carries us back to still older temples and a great pre-Christian art, from which, as from pre-Christian faiths, Catholicism has drawn a part of its splendour. It is, standing by itself as a Christian temple, a history and witness of all the ages and achievements of man, Christian and non-Christian.

In this temple Christ looks down upon us from the High Altar. There is His Crucified Form. That Form has become
 The
 Synthesis of
 Worship. a Thing of Beauty, lifted above the horror and tragic gloom of its original associations into a light and glory shed from the soul of a high Humanity, during almost twenty centuries of Catholic worship. Therefore, with this Image no statue, wrought in purest form in the proudest home of Grecian art, can, in its spiritual power, compare; for this Figure nailed to the Cross is a Divine Humanity—the Spirit Victor over the flesh; Love, in its lordship over self; Life immortal rising out of death; Eternal Light shining amidst the darkness; and God, the incomprehensible mystery of the Infinite Order, become Incarnate and comprehensible as a Perfect Man, living and dying for the good of others. In this Figure, therefore, such as it seems—wounded, conquered, pathetic, despairing—there is all beauty because there is all Goodness, all Wisdom, and all Power, coalescent in a complete Perfection. Near to it stands the Tabernacle,

recalling by its name that faith of the ancient Eastern world which has passed into Western Catholicism, and within the Tabernacle is the unseen, life-giving Presence of Our Lord Himself, the Food of the Soul, spiritually and symbolically contained, for all who can rightly apprehend and receive it, in simple material elements, given forth from the wide working of the universe, and made the mystic flesh and blood of Christ by the consecrating and transforming power of worship.

In natural association with the High Altar, are the Altar of Our Lady, and perhaps the Altar of St. Joseph—the one a witness to the beautiful homage accorded for so many centuries to the pure and tender Mother of God; the other recalling to us not only her Protector, and the Protector of the Church, but also Israel, of whom he may be regarded as the representative, with the long line of Saints, of whom he is, in a sense, the symbolic Head. These three altars together, therefore—over and above their other high uses—are a tribute to the Holy Family, and, as such, a consecration of the family life, the nucleus of the social order, as founded upon religion. The originating, centralizing Image amongst all other images in the Church is, however, what is represented in the Tabernacle on the High Altar. There is the heart of Catholicism. With it all the other symbols and instruments of worship have a natural connection, each pointing us to the Divine Christ—once a living Presence amongst men, but since present only by the Holy Spirit—and showing us how Humanity, in its various ages and with its various powers, may be looked upon as either prophetically preparing for His advent, or as relating itself to Him when come.

The altar itself is a pre-Christian construction, converted into the throne of Christ. The lights upon it, the incense, the vestments of the priests, the three ancient languages, Eastern and Western, which find a place in the Mass, show us the old world passing into the life of the new; while the use of Latin especially—the retention of which is one of

the decisive marks of the instinctive wisdom of the Church—brings before us the proudest of the world's empires succumbing to the Crucified; the free religious association of the medieval peoples; and the continued universality and unity of Catholicism, amidst all the developments and divisions of modern times. In the Scriptures and chants that are sung we can hear the pious voices of the Middle Ages rising in the praise of God. In the music that is played, in the organ, perfected in the ages, in the poems of the liturgy, and in the pictures and statues about the walls, we see how Christ, in His Perfection, has kindled in men an answering instinct of perfection, expressing itself in words and tones and forms of the beautiful; and as we give this assemblage of symbols and images its right place in the mind, we recognize how true it is that, in the Catholic Church, and especially during the celebration of High Mass, we become, as we can become nowhere else, one with a unified and continuous Humanity—a spiritual Humanity of all ages, of all lands, and of all languages—either unconsciously moving, as in the ancient world, towards the Perfection of Christ, or, as in Christendom, consciously acknowledging it, and progressively dedicating all its powers to its celebration and realization.

In proportion, however, as in worship we confess and pursue the Perfection of Christ, must we be conscious, as

Fallen Man. we leave the Church, that the world has not realized it. We may express ourselves in traditional language, and say that, as we leave the Church, we have in our hearts the image of an ideal Humanity, and that we then become aware once more that man is a fallen being. According to modern theories, man is not fallen but risen—risen from the ape. We know from history, however, and from our own experience, that man, whether or not he has risen from the ape, has fallen, and is always falling. This is the teaching of the Book of Genesis. The first chapters of Genesis are a poem, but they are also a scientific document—as much a scientific document, and an

infinitely more important document, than Darwin's "Descent of Man." They prove that, very early in human history, as distinguished from plant history or animal history, man had, in degree, a sense and vision of a perfect Humanity—of a being untainted by sin, beautiful in body, beautiful in mind; social, because united in spiritual love to another being like to himself; living in harmonious companionship with the Divine; and inhabiting a fair, untarnished region of earth and water and air, where all forms of vegetable and animal life, and the sky overhead, and the stars in the heavens, ministered to the innocent joy of his heart, and entered into the unity of his nature. In varying shapes and measures, this vision which the Book of Genesis expresses has always haunted the human mind, and relatively to it, as an ideal given and fixed, man, as he is commonly found, may properly be said to be fallen, and to be constantly falling. He has fallen, and he falls, from something which, in substance, in so far as he remains religious, he affirms to be good now, as he affirmed it three thousand years ago, and which, in rare moments and by rare men, has been reached.

When we pass out of the Catholic Church, after the celebration of High Mass, we have the vision of the ideal Adam in our minds, saved from the consequences of his sin, and brought back to his original perfection by the Cross of Christ. Then once more we are in the presence of fallen man. Eden is left behind, and instead we have entered a world of sin, ignorance, weakness, disease, ugliness, strife, war, destitution, and a fierce, absorbing struggle for material existence, in which man is arrayed against man, class against class, nation against nation, and sect against sect, and in which the great conquests and creations of Humanity, material and spiritual, can only be preserved by a desperate effort. It is the task of the Catholic Church, if it is indeed the voice and organ of Jesus Christ, and the sacrifice of the Cross is not to be rendered vain, to bring Adam, who is Man—the universal

Humanity of our world—back to the Paradise which he has lost. This has been its task in the past, and must continue to be its task in the future. In the past, however, it has pursued it spontaneously, indirectly, incompletely, and almost fortuitously, and, as a consequence, with a large measure of misdirection, waste, and failure. Henceforth it will be called upon to pursue it consciously and synthetically, with its eyes directed towards the social future; with blessing and hope for man's world, which is God's world, instead of condemnation and despair; with all the powers of human culture employed as powers of Christ; and with the sense that man, who carries Adam and Christ in his soul—the Perfect Man, the Fallen Man, the Regenerated and consummate Man—has it within his natural and “supernatural” capacity to fulfil his high vision of himself.

One of the aims which a synthetic and progressive Catholicism must propose to itself is that of bringing education once more under the control of the Church—in other words, of making it throughout its entire range, æsthetic, literary, scientific, and practical—subservient to the Spirit of Christ. Here, as elsewhere, the Catholic Church is right in the great principle which it affirms, and only wrong in the temper and policy by which it attempts to uphold it. It is right in saying that education ought to be religious; it is wrong in setting itself, in the name of religion, against the inevitable expansion and irreversible acquisitions of the modern mind. In proportion as it does this, education necessarily ceases to be Catholic, passing from its illuminating centre, which is Christ, and from the Church, which is the organ of Christ, into a heterogeneous and unordered secularism, and to the State, the natural vehicle of social compromises, as its appropriate instrument. For this anarchic situation, and for its continuance, the weakness and limitations of the Church are responsible. It has allowed the mind of man to outstrip it. It has rested in magic. It has assumed

that there could be a great growth of the human spirit in the arts, sciences, and industries—a continuous quickening and advance in intellectual experience and practical power—without any corresponding development in religious conceptions and doctrines. It has met this growth, in its bearing upon the things of faith, with a barren and futile policy of mere proscription and denunciation—barren and futile even within the circle of Catholicism itself, which cannot be kept out of relation with the vast, compulsive life of Humanity; and barren and futile still more as regards that immense field of thought and energy which lies beyond its jurisdiction.

This policy, as we have tried to show, it is necessary for it to abandon. It is suicide for the Church in relation to the modern mind, just as atheism—separation from Jesus Christ and Catholicism—is suicide for the modern mind in relation to the spiritual conquests of Humanity. The escape from the one form of suicide and the other can only be found in a living synthesis, inclusive of past and present—that is to say, in a complete and progressive Catholicism. The Catholic priest, whether at the altar, in the pulpit, or in the school, must quietly and humbly lay down the claims of magic, in which there is plainly no guarantee against incapacity, narrowness, intolerance, and ignorance, any more than there is a guarantee of goodness and wisdom, and content himself, as the artist, the scientific thinker, the teacher, and the statesman have to content themselves, with an authority won and exercised in a free atmosphere of reason and service. When he has done this he will have no difficulty in recovering for the Church its ancient and high office of directing education, and in making education, whether in worship, in the home, in the school, in the arts and sciences, or in practical life, what certainly it ought to be, a full Catholic culture in beauty and truth, and inspired and governed throughout by the Perfection of Christ.

Catholicism, thus become complete, and bringing the total culture and life of man into relation with Christ, will be

able to do what, in principle, it has always been under an obligation to do, but has never succeeded in doing—give

The Church
in Practical
Life.

a spiritual direction and character to man's material activity. The Church has failed in this

—failed not wholly, of course, but on so great a scale and so disastrously that it is impossible to conceal its failure—for a reason which we have now often assigned. It has failed because it has not been a Church of magic, advancing infallibly and victoriously to its ends, but a Church of human beings, sometimes, in a certain degree, on a level with their great task, and sometimes ignominiously below it. If the Church had been a Church of magic, independent of natural forces, either in man or in the world external to man, then to-day industry and politics would be Christian, the strife of classes would not exist, international peace would reign throughout the earth, and the trade of the soldier would have come to an end. Nothing more decisively shows that the Church, whatever its view of itself, and its claims for itself, has been a Church of human nature, pressing laboriously forward in a perpetual conflict with itself to the realization of its highest ideals, than the fact that, after nineteen centuries of Catholicism, man's industrial and civic action has still to be brought under the Christian law. What magic has failed to do, reason and spiritual love—Catholicism armed with the full force and foresight of the modern mind—may perhaps be able to accomplish.

By the Catholic organization of industry we mean an organization of it completely and systematically directed to spiritual and social ends, instead of to materialistic and personal ends. How far, for the purposes of such an organization, it may be necessary that industry should cease to be private and individual, and should pass under the control of the State, is a practical question which only an enlarging experience can finally decide. What is certain is that there is no more a necessary antagonism in principle between Chris-

Catholic
Industrial
Policy.

tianity and the State organization of industry than there is between Christianity and the State organization of national defence, or of various other public services. The supposition that what is called socialism is inevitably atheistic is simply due to confusion of mind. Many socialists are atheistic, just as many Catholics are greedy and selfish; but as we cannot justly charge greed and selfishness upon Catholicism, so we cannot justly charge atheism upon the socialistic principle. The socialism of the atheist, if he is a socialist—and is not, as often happens, a strong opponent of socialism—is not a consequence of his atheism, but is a mitigation of it. It is due, as a rule, to the working in him of what are, in themselves, perfectly Christian motives—a passion for social justice, a sense of sympathy with the poor. If socialism, properly so-called—that is to say, the organization and direction of industry for social ends—is a mistake, then it is a scientific or theoretic mistake, and is, therefore, a mistake which is at least as compatible with a belief in Christianity as is the profession of what is called industrial individualism.

But socialism, in this definite sense of the word, is not a mistake. It is both more Catholic and more scientific than the Catholicism which, by ignorance or misapprehension, denounces it. The purpose of Catholicism, stated in its simplest terms, has been to conform man to Christ—to penetrate the whole life of Humanity, inner and outer, with the sense and presence of the Divine, thus creating a universal spiritual unity. The purpose of Catholicism, therefore, in relation to industry is to take it out of the domain of self, and render it completely Christian. Whether this purpose can be best accomplished by making industrial production and distribution fully and systematically collective, or by leaving it, to use the ordinary word, “capitalistic”—this is, we repeat, a scientific and practical question, upon which men may disagree. About three things, however, there can be no disagreement: first, that it is the duty of the Catholic Church to bring industry as far as possible

under the rule of the spirit ; second, that it has never yet succeeded in doing this ; third, that its failure to do it has not only left industry, and human life as dependent upon industry, largely under the dominion of the lower motives, but has helped to bring Catholicism itself into discredit. It is a severe sentence, but a true, that just as the governing authority of the Church, by short-sightedness and neglect, gave rise to Protestantism, so, by a similar failure in provision and discipline, it has helped to produce the very atheism and materialism which it denounces.

The main spiritual and social aims to which industry, under its Catholic inspiration and rule, will be directed may be simply indicated. Industry must adequately feed, clothe, and house the whole people ; it must maintain the family life, and, as a consequence, enable woman to devote herself to her domestic functions—functions of supreme dignity and social importance—without being called upon to occupy herself outside the home ; it must provide for the support of the Spiritual Power, in the most extended sense of the term, including the priest, the schoolmaster, the physician, the artist, and the scientific investigator ; it must meet the needs of Temporal Government. It is, in short, the object of industry, understood as Catholicism ought to understand it—in other words, of industry become subject to the religious and synthetic spirit of man—to provide a secure material basis for the higher life of Humanity, individual and social. This basis, however, must be provided, not for one order of men and women only, but for all. The cause of Catholicism is not, as its exponents appear sometimes to suppose, bound up with the maintenance of our existing political machinery and class distinctions. Catholicism, which is the reign of Jesus Christ, has nothing to do with the perpetuation of capitalism, landlordism, imperialism, monarchies, aristocracies, and the craft of the soldier. A great part of the proceeds of industry is at present wasted—on the one hand in maintaining artificial and baneful class

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distinctions, representing a selfish materialism, and, on the other, in supporting a spurious and provocative imperialism and a retrograde militarism.

The Catholic Church—above all, the priesthood of the Church, if it really is its mind and directing intelligence—must recognize and declare that this wealth, thus diverted to unnecessary and evil aims, is taken from the service of Christ. The service of Christ—the spirit of self-renunciation and active religious love shaping the life of man—demands that every human body, the home and temple of the Divine, should be rightly sheltered and nourished, and that every human mind should possess fully its inheritance of truth and beauty; it demands, too, that every form of human society and co-operation should be under a co-ordinating and directing power. It does not demand that one class should possess exorbitant wealth, while the vast mass of society is absorbed in a sordid struggle to obtain it; it does not demand that the lord and the landlord, the rent-owner, the dividend-owner, the profit-owner, and the commercial gambler, should, as such, discharging no true industrial functions, exist as the standard and sanction of a false estimate of human life to the end of time. Catholicism is a doctrine of charity, and charity is one of the greatest words of human speech. It represents, however, something higher and wider than the casual eleemosynary exercises which satisfy the benevolence or pride of the rich, while demoralizing the poor. A true Catholic charity—an enlightened religious love of man, planning his perfection in Christ—instead of unintelligently and impotently acquiescing in our existing industrial and political organization, will proclaim the ideals of a nobler future, and boldly call upon men to pursue them. If our socialism is, as the Church says, atheistic, then let the Church itself come forward—invoking its own highest inspiration and traditions—and substitute for it a socialism which, being spiritual and Catholic, is also scientific. If the Catholic Church were what it ought to be—a power communicating

the Spirit of Christ to the whole life of man—there would be no need for a separate “socialism” at all.

What is true of industrial things is true also of the things of international life and policy. When we say that

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here also the modern mind calls upon the Catholic Church to be progressive, we use the word “progress,” as we have used it throughout, in a sense not merely compatible with Catho-

cism, but derived from Catholicism. Progress means, not—as in our revolutionary materialism it is commonly supposed to mean—an increase of numbers, or wealth, or mechanical power, but becoming, in a positive sense, more Christian and more Catholic. The Catholic Church is, alone of all the Churches in the world, international. It is as a sign and instrument of its universality that the Papacy, as we have seen, is so important. The highest function of the Papacy is to maintain and develop the spiritual life and concord of mankind. This function it has, of course, never in fact fully discharged, any more than the Church has discharged its function of bringing industry under the rule of the Spirit; but in the one case as in the other there is an ideal to be realized. The modern mind, accepting Catholicism, and operating upon it for its development and completion, will make the Papacy real. The Pope, as the Vicar of Christ, ought to be, in a pre-eminent sense, the voice of peace. He belongs to no nation, and yet to all. He is the watchman and counsellor of Humanity. He is qualified, as no other functionary in the world is qualified, to bring each separate State or country into a right relation—a relation of orderly co-operation and service—with the indivisible whole into which it enters. As the spokesman of no one sect or race or class or party, but of the Universal Church, he is entitled to rebuke the exclusiveness of any particular people, its arrogant pretensions, its disturbing encroachments. If an arbitrator is needed, he is the natural and common arbitrator of all the nations.

But these august offices the Papacy can only discharge by becoming, in the double sense of the word, Catholic—

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and the
non-Christian
World.

Catholic in the sense of being a purely spiritual organ of the Spirit of Christ; Catholic also in the sense of commanding the full resources of the developed mind of Humanity, holding all the precious things of its past, Christian and non-Christian, and pressing consciously forward towards an ideal future. As men go back upon the history of the Papacy, as a working institution, it is easy for them to discredit it by dwelling upon its errors and failures. Such a criticism of it, however—valid as it certainly is so long as the Papacy is supposed to wield a magic power, exempting it from all the disabilities of human nature—becomes plainly unscientific when we see in it, what in fact it is, the supreme organ of the religious mind of Humanity, and, as such, dependent upon the total movement of conscience and culture from age to age. Considered from this point of view, we are no more entitled, because of its mistakes, to dismiss it as an institution lapsed and discredited than we are entitled, for example, to say that all temporal government ought to come to an end because the history of government is, what it is, largely a history of oppression and incapacity. The office of the Papacy—regarded as the central representative of the Spiritual Power, and therefore as the symbol and instrument of the universal unity of Humanity—is of so great and permanent a consequence that we ought not to allow its actual lapses and aberrations to prevent us from seeing it in its ideal state. In its ideal state it will be purely spiritual, making the Perfection of Christ prevail, as it ought to prevail, not by menaces, anathemas, and proscriptions, but by teaching, counsel, and the high exercises of worship, and it will be completely and progressively Catholic. Only in this temper and by these methods can the Papacy, as the central power of Catholicism, hope to bring in the Paradisaic Man and establish the Kingdom of Heaven.

That kingdom is "not of this world"—that is to say, it is not a kingdom to be won and maintained, as the ascendancy of monarch and capitalist has often been won and maintained, by the energies of a gross materialism, serving the flesh, and taking the shortest road, by the misuse of power, to the accomplishment of its aims. The Kingdom of Heaven is not of the body, imposing itself upon the soul, but of the soul, ordering and illuminating the body. In the establishment of this kingdom, Catholicism must lay aside the style of "the world"—the style of denunciation and force—and put fully on the style of its Lord, Who was, and Who is, a Lord of love and peace, a Spirit speaking to the spirit. Its two great connected tasks in the modern world—connected in this sense, that the second cannot be accomplished without the first—are the conquest of the religious revolution within the domain of Christendom, and the winning of the non-Christian peoples to Christ. The older the world grows—the more non-Catholic Humanity, Protestant, atheistic, and Eastern, expands in vitality and force—the more certain it becomes that these two stupendous tasks may be accomplished by ways of education, persuasion, and reconciliation, but cannot be accomplished by any other.

To some modern minds—or rather, observing the distinction on which we have throughout insisted, to the revolutionary mind—it seems that the non-Christian faiths have an equal value with the Christian, and that Catholicism, consequently, has no call to undertake a mission to their adherents. It is natural for the revolutionary mind to come to this conclusion. It has lost its standard of scientific comparison in these matters because it has become separate from Christ, and therefore from that progressive Catholic Humanity which, in the Western world, has acknowledged Christ, and is Christ realized. It is, relatively to religion, in that state of anarchic individualism in which any one thing may be considered as good as any other, or in which the very words "good" and

“bad,” “high” and “low,” have ceased to possess a definite significance. If, however, we have preserved Christ in our hearts, or, having lost Him, have regained Him, our hope and purpose must be, in regard to Him, the hope and purpose of Catholicism—that all Humanity may yet be made one spiritual life, by the universal confession of Him in Whom we see a Perfect or Divine Humanity in a transcendent personal Image. To accomplish this great aim, nevertheless—the mere conception and pursuit of which are enough to cast light and consecration over the whole of life—Catholicism must possess fully in the future that title which, in so far as it has actually held it, has always been its peculiar strength—the title to speak for the Western mind, holding Christ indeed, but holding Him, apprehending Him, and fulfilling Him with a many-sided and widening culture, and as the principle of an advancing civilization. A Catholicism which is no longer in this sense Western—a Catholicism discredited intellectually and practically within its own distinctive domain, and unable to present to the non-Christian world the fair spectacle of a disciplined and concordant Humanity—such a Catholicism cannot hope to become universal. We cannot, indeed, say, speaking scientifically, that even such a Catholicism might not, even while undergoing a progressive decline, remain indefinitely—what it is now—the greatest of religious communities. History shows us that states of the collective human mind, when once they have become established and have expressed themselves as organized societies—from immense bodies such as Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Catholicism, down to Judaism and the Society of Friends—have a remarkable power of persistence, even under adverse conditions; and such a power the Catholic Church undoubtedly possesses. A future such as this, however—its mere persistence as the chief sect of a world of sects, for ever denouncing all its rivals, and for ever unable to reconcile them to itself—no one who has the sense of its true greatness can desire for it. We must wish for it that

it may establish its spiritual sovereignty, where it is necessary for it first to be recognized, in the high plane of Western progress; and that then, speaking with the full authority of a developed Humanity, it may give its peace to mankind.

So would the Kingdom of Heaven on earth be won, and the vision of the Lord's Prayer be fulfilled. So, too, would

The every Catholic worshipper be able to repeat, with
Paradise a fuller consciousness and intelligence than
of God. ever before, those great symbolic words of
worship: *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.* These words are, if such an expression may be allowed, the proper formula of Pascal's Man—the one Man, continuous through the ages, always living and always learning; always himself, and yet always changing, because always unfolding himself; and as he thus unfolds himself, coming ever into fuller and more conscious correspondence with that Infinite Order of things, visible and invisible, which is God. They are the formula of the modern mind, which defines progress—progress being ultimately a word of the soul—as becoming more and more Catholic. The modern mind, in virtue of the fact that it enters into the full spiritual and practical inheritance of mankind, looks back upon the whole human past, and forward to the human future. It sees the one as a continual emergence from the other, and as conditioned, therefore, in its development by the sum of its persisting forces. It sees the Catholic Religious Order, founded on Christ, as the central point in the expansion of Humanity—a point of attainment relatively to what preceded its establishment, a point of development or progress relatively to what has succeeded it.

The history of the world, therefore, is to the modern mind what, in degree, it has been for nineteen hundred years—the history, first, of the preparation for Christ, and, secondly, of the reign of Christ. The history of the world,

in other words, is the history of Catholicism, all things—whether in religion, in intellectual culture, in social organization, or in material activity—deriving place and significance from their relation to Catholicism. Catholicism, with Christ as its centre, is our human measure. It is this for the simple, incontestable reason that Christ, in what He is and represents, has not been, and cannot be, transcended. He is Himself transcendent. He is, as He has so often been called, the First and the Last, the One and the All. It is quite easy to show that the boldest of modern thinkers has not, in fact, added a single essential basic note to the gamut of spiritual truth which Christ proclaimed—according either to the Poem of the Gospels or to the presentation of Him to the world in Catholicism. What the modern mind gives to Catholicism it gives to it because it is itself Catholic. It gives to it a positive interpretation, and therefore a new authority. It gives to it completeness, and therefore a new force. It places it in a relation of sympathy, understanding, and co-operation with the non-Christian faiths of the world, even while it proposes to it to raise them into the unity of the Universal Church. It enables it to present itself to mankind as a power of progress, uplifting the soul into a full mastery and direction of the things of the body; giving unity, but also a widening life and development, to the mind; and bringing the vast society of mankind—the dead, the living, and the unborn—into an endless spiritual and social communion. In this way Adam, the continuous universal Humanity, becomes once more an inhabitant of the Paradise of God; and the Kingdom of Heaven—which is Christ, realizing Himself as an order of goodness, beauty, and truth in the life of man—finds its full consummation.

CHAPTER XXII

CONCLUSION

THE central, governing principle which it has been the object of the preceding pages to establish is, as we have seen, this—that what we may call the Human Problem, or the Problem of Humanity, admits of only one solution : it must be solved by bringing the whole life of mankind, Western and Eastern, past and present, into the unity of Jesus Christ, through the universal ascendancy of the Catholic Church, considered as His supreme, continuous organ of realization and application. By the Problem of Humanity, we mean, in general terms, the problem of religious unity—the problem of harmonizing all individual lives by bringing each individual life into conscious, intelligent, co-operating accord with the whole Order of things, outer and inner, material and spiritual, an Order of which man is at once an interpreter and a part, and which is ever unfolding itself, objectively and subjectively, as his development proceeds. This Order is an infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, omnipotent Whole, embracing within itself, and manifesting by a progressive emergence, in its two visible and coalescent constituents of Nature and Human Nature, those attributes of Power, Wisdom, and Love which are summed up in the representative conception and word “God.” This Universal Order—as was symbolically taught by Jesus Christ and St. Paul centuries before the rise of modern French and German terminologists—is a unity which admits, according to our point of view, of a monistic or a dualistic representation.

It is the Whole which contains Humanity ; it is Humanity which scrutinizes and contains the Whole ; and it further resolves itself into the various categories which constitute the fields of the respective sciences, forming, in their ordered completeness, the one science of God, or Theology.

It is in the nature of this Infinite Order, as it relates itself to the human mind, that it should be expressed by what we have called principles of contradiction or paradox, what is visibly a part being sometimes allowed to stand for the Whole which yet contains it, while the Whole, in its immeasurable extension, is yet conceived of as if distinct from its part. These principles of contradiction and paradox proceed, in fact, from the active sanity of the reason of man, as he reconciles, consciously and unconsciously, the predominance of his Environment with his own modifying action upon it, the Omnipotence and Omnipresence of God with human independence and freedom, and the three distinct Persons of the Trinity with the unity of the Divine Being. It is by such a principle that St. Paul says, "In Him we live and move and have our being," and that Our Lord—the Word made flesh, and flesh become the Divine Man—identifies Himself, in His distinctness, with that Whole which is the Father, and gives forth the eternal sentence, summing up the nature and consciousness of Humanity : "*I and My Father are One.*"

The reconciling, unifying ascendancy of the Catholic Church—its capacity to solve the human problem—depends, however, on two connected conditions. One of these conditions is, as we have seen, its full possession and mastery of the modern mind—of the synthetic mind of a developed Humanity—relatively to its own distinctive tasks. It is, in fact, only by such a possession and mastery that it can become, what it has always aimed at being, truly Catholic. Catholicism is not a mere geographical expression. The dominion which has to be won and held for Jesus Christ is not the earth ; it is the human spirit, as it explores its world and itself, and con-

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stantly extends its range of apprehension and culture. To win and hold this dominion the Catholic Church must live with the life of a progressive Humanity, and be Catholic in the sense of being continuous, expansive, and synthetic. It is contrary to its essential nature, and incompatible with its appointed work, for it to be either stagnant or sectarian. It is not uncommon for Catholic apologists, unhappily defending an impossible exclusiveness, and losing themselves in metaphysical phrases, to declare that, since God is One, there can be only one Truth of God, and one Church as the interpreter of that Truth. God certainly is One, but, as we have seen, He is also many. He is the All; He is Infinite; He is a progressive unfolding and emergence. He is God in the Old Testament and in the New; He is God in the medieval world and in the modern; but He is God according to the enlarging experience and conceptions of the human mind. Who shall set bounds to His being? He is no more contained, exclusively and finally, within the abstract definitions of a Council than within the formulæ of a particular science. The definitions and the formulæ have their value. They are a part of a progressive attempt to measure the immeasurable; they are a contribution to the illumination and settlement of the human mind, relatively to the inexplicable mystery which encompasses it. But the immeasurable is still unmeasured; and as the human mind advances, stage by stage, into the light, without deserting itself or contradicting itself, it ever enlarges and completes itself, and so becomes a more adequate channel for the reception and expression of that Divine Order which is at once without it and within it.

It is open to the Catholic Church to say—what, indeed, we have said throughout these pages—that there are higher and lower ways of apprehending and manifesting God, and that of all these ways the one which it has disclosed to men is that which, in the domain of historic theology, gives us the fullest access to His being, and imparts to us the largest impulse of His power. More than this it is not entitled to

say. The light of God, the light of Christ, like the light of the sun, is universal, and it is everywhere the same light, even although in one time, or in one place, it may be possessed more abundantly than in others. Music, in the same way, is one art, a rich, distinctive, and various unity, but we do not deny the title of music to a simple ballad, although we acknowledge that this title is possessed in a fuller degree by a great orchestral symphony. Exactly the same thing is true of the Catholic Church, in comparison with the non-Catholic and non-Christian religious communities. They all present us with a measure, varying in adequacy and value, of the being of God; and in Christendom Christ is confessed, and, in degree, apprehended in every society which is held together in His name. It is the essential purpose of this work to vindicate what we have called the presidential and unifying supremacy of the Catholic Church, but it is none the less true that the difference between that Church and the least of Protestant sects, important as it is, is, like the difference between an orchestral symphony and a ballad, or between an epic and a lyric, a difference of degree only. It is a difference so momentous, and of such consequence in the spiritual culture and unity of man, that our object, we repeat, is to end sectarianism, and bring in the reign of Catholicism; yet no one who has a sufficient knowledge of our various Protestant bodies, large or small, can have any doubt that the stamp of Christ is upon them all, and that, amidst their imperfections, when we take them, as we must take Catholicism itself, at their highest point of realization, we find them in sanctifying, fructifying relation with the centre of the Christian life.

Truth, then—the revelation of God—is not a sort of external, talismanic entity, which may be captured and held in exclusive possession by any single society of men. The word “truth,” philosophically understood, is, as we have shown, an abstraction. It denotes the permanent and progressive relation of the discriminating and co-ordinating human

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mind with the sum of its experiences; and as those experiences progress in fulness and exactness, so truth becomes a surer approximation to a right measure of reality. The communities which are less, or lower, than the Catholic Church have still their proportion of truth; and the Catholic Church itself has, from the nature of the human mind in relation to God, only such a command of it, at any one time, as makes it incumbent upon it to ever fulfil itself and become increasingly Catholic. Its command of truth, moreover—the degree in which it represents and expresses the high religious mind of Humanity—is not to be estimated merely by its formal definitions, or by the arguments of its preachers. The Church itself, as a living body of spiritual Humanity, continuous and universal, is infinitely more than any particular manifestation of it. Its Divine Lord, Our Lady, its Scriptures, its Saints, its monastic communities, its religious orders, its mystics, its hierarchy, its poets, its artists, its sacraments, its liturgy, its temples—these represent a system and procession of religious vitality, many-sided and majestic, the power and importance of which cannot be gauged by the terms of a Papal encyclical, or the questions of a catechism, or the declarations of a pulpit. The soul, the secret, of the Church is to be found above all in its worship, and this not merely because the worship, in a complete presentation of it, is a piece of noble ceremonial, but because it carries with it, in significant symbolic forms of art, the whole religious life of Humanity, and brings us, by an irresistible attraction—if we are capable of receiving truth through images and voices of beauty, instead of in terms of analysis—into the full presence of the Divine. When we enter a Protestant Church, whatever its excellence, we are in no such atmosphere. We may hear in it, and frequently do hear, a discourse much more efficient than the one we usually get in a Catholic Church—more penetrated, perhaps, by intellectual culture, wider in theoretic survey, more liberal, and more in relation with the active life of

the world. Nevertheless, in a Catholic Church, the heir of the ages, we are nearer to a total Humanity, and more conscious of the Perfection of God.

Such an effect, however, is an effect of worship—an effect which, by the teaching of the pulpit, is often not supported or enhanced, but rather destroyed.

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Doctrine.

This, of course, is not so much a consequence of any personal incapacity in the preacher as of the limitations of outlook and culture arbitrarily imposed upon him—limitations under which the Church refuses that immense succour and resource which, in the illumination and development of its teaching, and in the power to give to it a large social application, it could derive from the full, synthetic modern mind. The result of this is that the Catholic Church, which in its native, inherited wealth—in its accumulations of spiritual experience, in its noble traditions, in its sacred memories, in its universality, in its natural hold upon history—is incomparably richer than any other communion, yet so often, in its abundance, gives us an impression of poverty. From this contradiction—a contradiction between the survey of its official interpreters, not rightly cognisant of the greatness of which they are guardians, and the boundless domain over which they preside—the Church can only escape by calling to its aid the conquests and the vision of a complete Humanity, recognizing itself in all its past, reconciling the things of its childhood with the things of its maturity, and pressing forward, with an ever wider consciousness and surer prevision, to the fulfilment of itself in the future. Catholicism is waiting for a new light to be shed upon it. In that light it will not die, but live with a larger life. It has, in fact, not only less to lose, but more to gain, than all other religious communities from the exercise of the critical, practical power of the modern reason. It has less to lose, it has more to gain, because, as we have shown, it is actually, in the domain of religion, an unrivalled depositary and expression of human experience, and because, there-

fore, it is best qualified, when once it understands its true strength, to turn all new experiences and powers to account. If we suppose—an assumption which we have dismissed as inconceivable—that in this exercise of the modern analytic reason there is something necessarily fatal to all religion, then Catholicism will not die, and the sects live; rather the sects will die, and Catholicism, if it too is to die, will yet outlive them. Our concern, however, is not with the death of Catholicism; it is with its continued and expanding life.

But the possession and mastery by the Catholic Church of the full resources of the modern mind—this is only one of the two connected conditions on which its solution of the human problem depends. Even if we suppose it, in principle, to have satisfied this condition—in other words, if we suppose it to have armed itself with the synthetic culture of Humanity, and to have entered on the way, relatively to the Catholic realization of Christ in man, of liberty, progress, and demonstration—still it will remain necessary for the large world which is at present outside the scope of Catholicism, to bring itself into accord with it, and become Catholic. This, to many minds, and perhaps even to most Catholics, must at present seem a dream. A dream, however, may be the vision of a future reality, and a power preparatory to its coming into being. Historic Catholicism itself was once a dream. The Church was a grain of mustard seed. The most splendid spiritual society on earth dates from the Crucifixion. As compared with the Roman Empire in the time of Tiberius, the Upper Chamber in Jerusalem, or what that Upper Chamber represented, must have seemed, to the critical, practical reason of the first century, an impossible chimera. But the Roman Empire, as such, is dead; the Upper Chamber is the eternal spiritual sanctuary of the highest Humanity. The dream of a world-wide Catholicism—of a limitless brotherhood of faith, of the one fold, the one shepherd, of man, in his universal

being, moving through the ages in conscious concord with the being of God—this, if it is a dream, is a dream which now rests on a larger body of actual achievement than any to which the first Christians could appeal. It has, in human experience and power, more for it and less against it than the vision of the one Church which inspired them. Amidst all our materialism, it is the master-lesson of civilization that it is the spirit that lives and rules. For almost a hundred years at least, if for no longer a time, men within the bounds of Christendom have been praying for religious reunion, and even those who have ceased to call themselves Christians have not ceased to proclaim the ideal of brotherhood. It has become a common word of human hope. It is a word of the Catholic Church; it is a word of the Protestant Churches; it is a word of the revolution; it was the word of Jesus Christ and St. Paul; it is the word, the impulse, and the passion of a universal Humanity.

Such an impulse and passion, such an ideal, working in men and societies so dissimilar, and over so wide an area, must ultimately bring about their own fulfilment. Conditions of Religious Unity. The first step towards human unity in religion is to desire it; the second is to recognize the conditions which, in scientific reason, it requires; the third is to accept them, and to dedicate all our powers to their accomplishment. The conditions which complete religious unity, scientifically considered, requires we have indicated in this work. It depends, first, on the development of Catholicism within the Church; it depends, secondly, on the acknowledgment and acceptance of such a developing Catholicism without it. It is not possible by any mere process of revolution; it is only possible by a process of reasoned continuity and deliberate fulfilment. The various religious bodies outside Catholicism—the Christian communities first, and ultimately the non-Christian—must confess its natural social primacy, as the highest and completest realization of Christ, and therefore of the supreme

and universal type of perfection, and voluntarily subordinate themselves to its greatness. A similar submission must be given to it also by the large number of men and women who have professedly passed out of the community of Christendom, but who, because they have not ceased to cherish an ideal of human perfection and unity, will have no indisposition to reconcile themselves to Catholicism when once they see it avowedly, and in a spacious way of liberty and progress, pursuing this great aim.

There are at least two important reasons why it must seem to us not chimerical to hope—in spite of all the conflicts and self-assertion of our modern world

Sociology and Catholicism. —that this voluntary and deliberate choice of Catholicism will ultimately be acknowledged as a condition of religious reunion. One of these we may call a reason of science; the other is a reason of spiritual experience. On grounds of science, the position and claims of the Catholic Church, as compared with other Christian communities, are to-day, it is no exaggeration to say, surer than they have ever been before. Science—in spirit and method undoubtedly, if not in the certainty and exactness of its conclusions—has now, in degree at least, taken possession of the field of social life. In that field, as in the fields of what we call natural phenomena, its one object is to determine the presence and character of great persisting and governing forces, and their laws or modes of uniform action. In view of this ascertained order of social life—an order both of fixity and development—as in view of what we are accustomed to distinguish as the natural order, men must eventually recognize that their power, large and progressive as it may really be, is not a power of subversion, but a power of modification and use, and that the exercise of this power of modification and use depends on discernment and acceptance.

In other terms, the conclusion to which science comes, in relation to the social order—and in relation, therefore, to the Church, as one of the constituents of that order—is,

in essentials, the conclusion to which Christianity has always come—the conclusion, namely, in the words of Auguste Comte, that “submission is the basis of improvement.” This is one reason, amongst others, why merely revolutionary processes, whether in the field of politics or the field of religion, have in themselves—whatever their immediate practical justification, and however high the hopes they have excited—commonly accomplished no fundamental change in the life of man. It is one reason why Protestantism, democracy, and individualism are not, as principles, beneficent, and why they have so often carried men into action from which reaction was inevitable.

In a scientific estimate of social relations, the Catholic Church presents us with a vast assemblage of accumulated and persisting forces, which may, in degree, be modified and transformed, but which we cannot expect to wholly resist or annul. This natural social ascendancy of Catholicism is all the surer because what seems to be beyond its scope is yet a testimony to it, and is, in varying degree, represented by it. The religions of ancient Europe, the faiths of the East, the Greek Church, the Protestant Churches, have all their visible points of affinity and contact with the Catholic Church. It is universal not only by its professed aim and by its actual diffusion, but by the latent principles contained in it—by the fact that, when it entered on its course of growth and development, it carried with it, in sufficient measure, the powers and characteristics of earlier and lower forms of religion, and that even the communions which have separated themselves from it have still, in their separation, been compelled, by its irresistible constraining force, to keep more or less in conformity to it. In proportion as the patience and breadth of science—which in its sureness and spaciousness is also naturally Catholic—overcome the disposition of mere revolt, or the narrowness of sectarianism, in the sphere of religion, this representative greatness of Catholicism, its title to speak as the

Representative
Character of
Catholicism.

religion of a total Humanity, will be recognized and admitted.

All the more will this be the case when the Catholic Church, consciously and systematically, claims this place for itself, and, instead of adopting an attitude of mere anathema and antagonism towards the non-Catholic and non-Christian bodies, views their incompleteness in relation to its own completeness, and, in virtue even of their partial affinities with itself, appeals to them to enter, as vitalizing elements, into its own fulness and development. Submission to the Catholic Church, when it so understands itself, and is so understood, will be regarded as an act of the highest rationality—an act corresponding in sanity and beneficent effect with the active, modifying and co-operating submission which we are called upon to give to the order of nature. We have, in fact, as we have now so often pointed out, in regard to religion only a limited power of choice. We may choose, or suppose ourselves to choose, no religion at all. We may elect to be, or allow ourselves to be, atheists. If, however, we choose religion, then our choice must be either a sectarian choice of one of the lower and narrower forms of religion which are contained in Catholicism, or of Catholicism itself, which comprehends and transcends them all.

The second reason why we are justified in assuming that this deliberate choice of a progressive Catholicism will eventually take place is, as we have said, a reason of spiritual experience. During the course of the last eighty years—to go no farther back—the Catholic Church, even in its exclusive resistance to the modern spirit, has shown a remarkable capacity to attract back to itself not only individual minds, but a large religious society, external to it and antagonistic to it. Of the individual minds which have thus acknowledged its influence, the two which may be taken as types are, in France, Auguste Comte, and, in England, Cardinal Newman, the one representing the revolution, the other Protestantism.

The Modern
Catholic
Movement.

Comte's return to Catholicism was limited and disfigured by his atheism, and it was, moreover, complicated and obscured by his attempt to found what he considered a "new religion." It was, nevertheless, real and signal. The case of Newman is, in certain respects, even more significant. He was a Protestant, in a Protestant nation. His early training and convictions were, in a special degree, anti-Catholic. His approach to Catholicism was by slow and painful stages, occupying a quarter of a century. It was the approach of a man of genius, and, as every reader of the "Apologia" knows, of a vigorous, critical, cautious intelligence, which had a singular power of selecting its ground, of observing limits, of arresting itself, and then, at last, of gathering all its forces for a deliberate choice. He chose Catholicism, too, at a time when, in England, it was only just emerging out of public insignificance, and when, in so choosing it, he necessarily separated himself from the common life of his country.

The return to Catholicism, or the recovery of Catholicism, by such minds as those of Comte and Cardinal Newman becomes all the more significant when we recognize that both these eminent men were, in different ways, representatives of a social mind and a social movement. Newman has with justice been described as not only a distinguished Catholic convert, but the founder of the later Anglicanism. It is not necessary to speak here of the extraordinary development of Catholic sentiment, teaching, and practices, which has now characterized the Church of England for many years, and which has been by no means without its parallel in the Presbyterian and Dissenting bodies. It is known to all students of our religious history, and is, indeed, a matter of common observation. What, however, gives to this movement its chief significance is the period in which it has been accomplished, together with the conditions, theoretic and practical, under which it has fulfilled itself. It has been a movement wholly spontaneous and voluntary. It cannot be

said to have been due to the menaces or proscriptions of the Catholic Church, or to any splendour in its public manifestation, or even to its missionary efforts. Catholicism has won its way in England during the last eighty years against an extraordinary body of misunderstanding and prejudice—not by threatening men, or by bribing them, or by actively persuading them, but by attracting them. It has won them simply by being itself. That is a truth on which both Catholics and non-Catholics would do well to meditate. It has won them, too, at a stage in the world's history which might have seemed wholly unlikely to witness any such reassertion of its influence. The English Catholic movement, as it is sometimes called, is a movement of the nineteenth century—the century which inherited the frigid scepticism of the eighteenth; which was ushered in by the storm of the French Revolution; which, in the intellectual sphere, was the century of Comte and Spencer, and Darwin and Strauss, and of almost unparalleled advances in the applied sciences; and which, in the practical sphere, was the age of the steamship, the locomotive, the electric telegraph, and of a vast industrial and political transformation. Nothing, on the face of it, or according to the common critical estimate of Catholicism, could have seemed less favourable to the re-establishment of its power in Protestant England than those conditions of wide scientific expansion, anarchic intellectual analysis, and limitless practical energy, under which it has actually taken place.

From this recovery of Catholicism—a recovery varying in character and degree—in the two fields of Protestantism and the revolution, it is necessary to draw the right conclusion. It does not create any presumption that the Catholic Church, considered in its arrested development, in its mere resistance to its own unfolding, has the capacity to command the human future. The force of mind against it—the force which it has lost, the force which it has failed to gain—is too vast

and persistent for any such supposition to be entertained. What this recovery proves is that the distinctive good of Catholicism, like the distinctive good of what is highest in art and science, is too precious a thing for Humanity, as it reaches after a full perfection, to leave it behind. It proves that men cannot permanently rest in the narrowness and self-sufficiency of Protestantism, or in the waste and disorder of the revolution, but must go back, in proportion to their moral and intellectual development, upon the great constructions of the religious genius, and possess themselves of them as powers of life. The modern mind, amidst its apparent denials and dispersive energies, is a mind stretching toward completeness. It is, in its highest instincts and ideals, synthetic. As such, Catholicism, in its majestic unity and universality—Catholicism seen, not in its sectarian exclusiveness, but as a movement and procession of spiritual Humanity, holding the ages in its life—makes a natural appeal to it. This appeal is so real and potent—the distinctive good of Catholicism, the good of the realized beauty of Christ, calling forth in man the perfect Humanity, is so sure and great—that some minds, amidst the futility of mere rejection, or the barren exercises of “private judgment,” will choose it even when they have to pay for it by a sterile acquiescence in things which, in their mere unillumined formality, have ceased to have a spiritual force. Even such a choice is not so irrational as to some reasoners it may seem. In Catholicism we gain Christ as nothing else gives Him to us. The simplest and most ignorant of worshippers in a Catholic Church—because faith is scientifically a mode of possession—is in contact with a more important body of truth than the proudest of modern philosophers, producing volumes of abstractions, or a “higher critic” spending his life in the dissection of texts of Scripture. In the imperfect choice of an imperfect Catholicism there is still a choice of the Perfect.

But the imperfect is nevertheless the imperfect, the

Perfect the Perfect. The Catholic Church must recognize that no mere assertion of itself, and no mere proscription of others, can give it a title in the world which it has not actually won. It has not yet fulfilled itself. It has not realized in the life of Humanity the life of its Lord. It is impossible for it to do this unless it masters the revelation of God in its full completeness. It cannot do this unless it does in the modern world, on a greater scale, what, in degree, it did in the ancient and medieval—enter into possession of the total body of man's progressive acquisitions and culture, and understand itself, its conceptions, its doctrines, its worship, and its discipline in the light which is thus naturally shed upon them. It can only fulfil the mind of its Lord in the future, as in fact it has always fulfilled it in the past, through the mind of a developing Humanity.

The history of Christ is the history of Western civilization. We see Him first in Palestine, as He is painted for us in the Poem of God—a beneficent, beautiful, radiant Presence, working upon nature and human nature, nourishing and healing the bodies of men, illumining and transforming their minds, lifting them out of sin and evil, and in their misery, selfishness, and disorder, giving Himself to them as a Sacrifice of love and Spirit of peace. We see Him afterwards, in His Church, entering upon the broad stage of the Empire, mastering the mind of Greece, mastering the force of Rome, but even as He masters them and gives to them of Himself, receiving from them in turn, and passing, in His representative personal being, into the social being of Humanity. We see Him next, in His spiritual association with Our Lady, and ministered to by a cohort of Apostles and Saints, shaping the international community of the Middle Ages, bringing the peoples under His law, and, in some measure at least, breathing upon men, in their darkness and evil passion, His holiness and light. He moves and works thus, continuously in space and time, because He is a Perfect Humanity—the something

greater than ourselves which summons us out of ourselves, and gives us no happiness or rest except in the pursuit of it. He has yet to move in a still larger field than that of Palestine, or the Roman Empire, or medieval Europe. He is to enter as a Master, giving and yet receiving, into the wide spaces of the modern mind and the undivided world of man. This is the coming Catholicism. But, in its universal expansion and power, it will still, according to its old and just claim, be the same Catholicism as proceeded out of Palestine nearly two thousand years ago, carrying with it the life of its Lord; for its mission as His Church must ever be to work upon nature and human nature, to nourish and heal the bodies of men, to illumine and transform their minds, to lift them out of sin and evil, to unite them in a single spiritual society, and, in their selfishness and disorder, to present to them the beautiful Eternal Christ, the Divine Humanity, as a sacrifice and power of love and peace.

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